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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

BY

RAMSAY MUIR

Lately Professor of Modern History in the University of Manchester

VOLUME II

(THE MODERN COMMONWEALTH)

PART VI

THE RIVALRY AND CONFLICT OF WORLD-POWERS

(A.D. 1880—1919)

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CHAP. PAGE

III. THE WORLD ON THE EDGE OF THE CATARACT, . . 763

§. 1. The Desire of the World for Organised Peace, p. 763; § 2. The Successive Crises of 1905-1914, p. 765; § 3. British Preparations for the Conflict, p. 769; § 4. The Precipitation of the World-War, p. 772.

IV. THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE GREAT WAR, . 775

§ 1. The Magnitude and Variety of the War, p. 775;
§ 2. The Contribution of the Commonwealth, p. 776;
§ 3. The Test of the Commonwealth Ideal, p. 782;
§ 4. Some Consequences of the Great War, p. 785.

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX, ... *I*

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By **RAMSAY MUIR**

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BOOK XI

THE AGE OF IMPERIALISM AND THE RIVALRY OF WORLD-POWERS

(A.D. 1880-1904)

INTRODUCTION

A VERY sudden and marked change came about in the politics of the world, and consequently of the British Commonwealth, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The primary cause of this change was that the greater European States had largely solved the problems which had distracted them since 1815; they had achieved national unity and set up stable systems of representative government; and they were now able to devote their attention to industrial development, and to the exploitation of the non-European world. At the same time the United States, having in the Civil War brought to an end the conflict between two types of civilisation which had long retarded their development, entered upon a period of very rapid industrial expansion, and showed a growing readiness to play a part in world affairs. The era of liberalism and nationalism was succeeded by the era of commercialism and imperialism; and Britain found herself faced by acute rivalry in the two spheres—trade and colonisation—in which she had enjoyed, for two generations, an almost unchallenged supremacy.

The most unhappy and unhealthy aspect of this great change was the division of Europe by a rivalry more intense and more dangerous than had been known in any earlier period of European history. The Continent was divided between two hostile and watchful groups of Great Powers, armed to the teeth. They looked forward to future armed conflict as almost inevitable; and in the meanwhile they fought one another, in peace, with commercial weapons, each nation striving after the unattainable ideal of national self-sufficiency. At the same time they launched into an eager competition for extra-European dominions, striving to construct world-empires on the foundations of nation-States. The result was that, with extraordinary rapidity, all the unoccupied regions of the world were brought under the dominion of the European Powers; and the whole round globe was brought within a single unhappy and precarious political system, whose instability made the possibility of a universal war an ever-present peril.

In this transformed and dangerous world, the British Commonwealth could no longer enjoy the self-complacent placidity which had characterised its life during the middle of the nineteenth century. Not the motherland only, but all the members of the Commonwealth, felt themselves imperilled, and were inevitably drawn into a more intimate involvement in world-politics than they had known since the Napoleonic era, if even then. They were also drawn more closely together than before; and the indifference to imperial questions that had marked the mid-century gave place to a strong sentiment of unity, which was expressed in a multitude of ways, but most notably in the common effort of the South African War. For the British people, as for Europe, this was an era of imperialism. After a period of hesitation, they joined in the race for new dominions; and their advantages in this competition were so great that they acquired territories amounting to three and a half million square miles in area—a new empire, very swiftly acquired, to which we may give the name of the Third British Empire.

The somewhat flamboyant imperialism of this period was accompanied, in the British lands as in the European countries, by a growing social unrest, which contributed, as much as the international dangers of the time, to kill the rather stagnant self-complacency of the previous period. New social aspirations were only beginning to stir in Britain, but in New Zealand and Australia they found expression in a series of remarkable experiments.

It is a period of momentous importance for the history of the world, and of varied and enchaining interest, with which we have to deal in this Book. It is still too near us to allow of final or measured judgments; the issues which it raised are still in controversy. But we cannot avoid the responsibility of trying to understand it, for in many ways it provides the keys of later developments. For the British Commonwealth its culminating points were the South African War and the long debate on Ireland; and on these events feeling is still intense, and opinions differ widely. We must strive to narrate such events as these with a cool and steady loyalty to facts, remembering always that no man is entitled to express an opinion upon any controversial question until he can understand how men as able and honest as himself can hold opinions widely different from his own.

CHAPTER I

GERMAN HEGEMONY AND THE ARMED PEACE

(A.D. 1878-1895)

§ 1. *The Armed Peace.*

AFTER the Congress of Berlin in 1878 Europe might reasonably have looked forward to a prolonged period of peace, for most of the causes of disturbance by which her peoples had been troubled since 1815 had now been removed. Europe did obtain an interval of peace, longer than she had ever known before. If the vexed region of the Balkan Peninsula be disregarded, no hostile army crossed any European frontier for thirty-six years after the Congress of Berlin, and so much cannot be said of any period of equal duration in the history of modern times. But the peace of these years was the most anxious and unrestful peace that civilisation had ever known. Throughout this generation all the nations were watching one another with suspicion and distrust; all were training their whole manhood for war, and squandering their wealth upon military armaments on a scale never approached in any earlier age. The fear of war became an obsession which, in the end, helped to precipitate the dreaded catastrophe, like the vertigo that overcomes a man who looks down into an abyss.

The result of this unhappy state of things was that the long peace did not do for Europe what it ought to have done: it did not enable her to adjust her social order easily to the new economic conditions which now dominated the world; and it did not help the newly established institutions of self-government to take root and to win the confidence of the peoples they existed to serve. The social problem was accentuated by a colossal waste of wealth upon unproductive expenditure, and by the suspicions which this created; while the system of self-government, which demands openness and trust, was vitiated by the constant anticipation of war, which necessitates secrecy and

inspires distrust. To this was partly due the fact that in every country there was a growing movement of revolt, a growing decay of belief in the validity of the existing social and political order, and a growing menace of blind revolution. Every country suffered from these conditions, even the British Commonwealth, whose peoples had hitherto been able to hold themselves aloof from the troubles of Europe; and their fortunes became more and more involved with the fortunes of civilisation as a whole.

§ 2. *Commercialism and Imperialism.*

The most outstanding fact about European civilisation in this era was that the methods of large-scale mechanical production which had been first developed in Britain, and the high organisation of credit and finance which Britain had carried further than any other country, were now being imitated everywhere. As soon as the national wars in Europe and the Civil War in America came to an end, industrial development advanced by leaps and bounds. New methods and forces were brought into play. The age of electricity began; the telephone first came into serious use at the end of the 'seventies, the dynamo, invented in 1867, was becoming practicable at about the same time, and the use of electricity for traction began early in the 'eighties. The age of oil was also beginning: the world's production of mineral oils was quadrupled between 1880 and 1895. In the ,rapid expansion of industrial activity which began in the seventies, Britain was only one among several almost equal competitors. The most remarkable feature of the period was the rise of two great new industrial powers, America and Germany.

So illimitable were the resources of America in coal and iron, in all the metals, in oil, in timber, that it was inevitable she should take the lead as soon as these resources began to be seriously developed. By 1880 she had effectively opened up her vast area by railway construction. Her population also had immensely increased: in 1880 she was already far ahead of the mother-country in numbers, and by 1900 her population was practically twice that of the United Kingdom. Her industrial growth was proportionate. In 1880 it was estimated that in the total volume of industrial production she ranked fourth among the nations. Long before 1900 she ranked definitely first. But she was in the main, as yet, a self-contained nation, consuming almost the whole

of her own industrial products, and exporting principally food and raw materials. Except in regard to ingenious contrivances for saving labour, she was not yet a serious competitor in the world markets; and she practically did not possess a mercantile marine.

The rise of Germany was even more remarkable than that of America. It was mainly due to her great natural resources in coal, which surpassed those of Britain, to the systematic industry of her people, and, perhaps above all, to the strength she drew from the scientific training provided in her schools and universities. This enabled her to take a commanding lead in the newer and more scientific industries. The electrical industries she made her own from the first; in the fine chemical trades she was almost equally strong, and her men of science enabled her to obtain control over the coal-tar dyeing industry, which arose from the discoveries of a British chemist. But her greatest strength lay in iron and steel, the key-industries of the modern world. Two figures are enough to illustrate her amazing progress in this field. In 1880 she produced $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of steel, against $3\frac{3}{4}$ million tons produced by Britain. In 1895 she produced over $7\frac{1}{4}$ million tons, Britain less than 6 million tons. She had definitely taken the first place in Europe, and ranked next to the United States, whose progress had been still more rapid. Equally remarkable was the development of German shipping. In 1880 Germany had only 216,000 tons of steam shipping, and was surpassed by both France and Spain: Britain's figure in that year (for steam tonnage only) was 2,700,000. By 1900 the German total had risen to 1,348,000—a sixfold multiplication in twenty years. The British figure had meanwhile risen to over 7,000,000 tons, so that British leadership in this sphere was still secure. But the German mercantile marine had definitely become the second in the world, and the great shipping lines of Hamburg and Bremen were extending their enterprises to every part of the globe.

The astonishing advance of German industry and trade during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a very remarkable achievement, which naturally swelled the pride and self-confidence that had already been bred in the German people by their military triumphs. Other nations shared in the advance: France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, even Russia, were all making haste to turn themselves into industrial countries. None of them could rival the swift advance of Germany and America. But the

result of their combined activities was that all Europe was following the trail blazed by Britain; and the amount of material wealth both produced and consumed by the world was increasing almost in geometrical progression.

This was in itself a good thing. It meant that there was more wealth to divide; and one of its inevitable consequences was that the whole world was becoming economically interdependent, so that the prosperity of each depended upon the prosperity of all. But the European nations were tempted to regard one another as rivals and enemies in this fierce industrial competition. Each wanted to buy as little as possible from its rivals, and to sell as much as possible to them; the old desire for national self-sufficiency still survived, in spite of the fact that in the conditions of modern industry it is wholly unrealisable. In the hope of securing these ends, the nations began to raise tariff-barriers against one another, making their own peoples pay higher prices in order to give a monopoly to the home producer. Germany adopted a protectionist system in 1880, and gradually developed it during the next twenty years: by 1900 the average duty on British manufactured goods imported into Germany was 25 per cent. of their cost. America, also, the one country that could be almost self-sufficient, gradually raised her tariff until, under the M'Kinley tariff of 1890, the average duty on British imports was 73 per cent. France's Méline tariff of 1892 was more modest—the average rate was about 34 per cent.; Russia's duties reached the preposterous average rate of 131 per cent. Complex negotiations and bargainings accompanied this competition in exclusiveness; there were also direct tariff-wars between particular States, as between France and Italy in the years following 1888. Every nation was bent upon getting the better of every other nation; and not one of the great trading countries, save Britain, was willing to throw its markets open to all comers. The fact that Britain was fast losing her one-time pre-eminence was held to prove the folly of her policy. Yet Britain was getting her share of the increased volume of world-trade; and she could not ultimately hope to obtain a larger volume of trade than would be proportionate to her natural resources and to the number, industry, thrift, skill and knowledge of her people. That, after all, was the ultimate criterion; tariffs or no tariffs, the industrial development of every country depended upon its natural resources and the number and character of its people.

But what all this meant was that, instead of making for

peace, industrialism and commercialism were making for international jealousy and friction; and Cobden's confident expectation that the growth of international commerce would lead to mutual understanding among the nations was being woefully disappointed. Indeed, it appeared that war and violence might be made the foundation of industrial progress. Germany, at least, was convinced that this was so. It was only since her victories in the field that she had begun to win the more lucrative triumphs of the forge, the factory, and the dockyard. Her ascendancy in iron and steel rested largely upon the rich iron deposits of Lorraine, which she had torn from France, and some of her most thriving textile factories were in the conquered province of Alsace. War and industry were not, it seemed, incompatible, as Cobden had believed: war could lay the foundations of industrial success; and industry, in its turn, could supply the materials of war. With her great steel and chemical industries, Germany would be stronger for war than ever before. The other nations accepted these conclusions. They too must nurture to prosperity the industries on which war depended; and that was one of the motives for striving after industrial self-sufficiency.

Closely connected with the commercial causes of international friction was the keen competition for colonial possessions which formed one of the most marked features of this era. It was so important in its results, and affected so intimately the fortunes of the British Commonwealth, that we must devote to it a special chapter.[1] Here two points about it may be noticed. It was largely due to the fierce commercial rivalry of the age. The nations wanted territories which would supply them with raw materials under their own control; this was a corollary of the desire for national self-sufficiency. They wanted also to enlarge the range of the markets that were restricted to their own trade; therefore, as we shall see, they did not, in most cases, open their dependent territories as Britain did to the traders of all nations, but surrounded them with tariff-walls; and so extended the friction of tariff-war over the face of the globe. And another consequence followed from the swift colonial expansion of the 'eighties and 'nineties. In every part of the world the jealous European rivals found themselves brought face to face, competing for territorial possessions; so that any dispute arising in any corner of the earth might cause a general conflagration.

[1] Chapter ii. below, p. 620.

When the nineteenth century, so full of generous hopes, reached its close, the world was dominated by a group of giant empires armed to the teeth and watching for opportunities to take advantage of one another. Naturally their main preoccupation was to see that their fighting resources were efficient. Hence imperialism of the new pattern was a cause of international friction, and a menace to peace, even more serious than commercialism.

§ 3. *The Hegemony of Germany: Militarism.*

But behind the factors of commercial and colonial rivalry, colouring them, intensifying them, poisoning them, lay the political situation in Europe. This, after all, was the main cause of the grim armed peace: this, and the spirit which now seemed to animate the relations of the European peoples, the spirit of militarism, the belief that brute force is the ultimate determining factor in human affairs.

The outstanding fact in the politics of Europe during the generation following the Franco-German War was the strength of the position of Germany. Under her formidable Chancellor, who dominated all his contemporaries, she unquestionably enjoyed the hegemony of Europe. After her dazzling victories, her prestige was unbounded: no single Power would have dared to measure arms with her. And her prestige grew as the years passed, and as she added the victories of commerce to those of war. She held a position not unlike that of France in the time of Louis XIV., and was all too humbly accepted as the leader of Europe in thought and learning, as well as in the arts of war. Bismarck, indeed, always maintained that, having achieved her ends, Germany was the most pacific of Powers; and until 1890 or even later, it seemed to be so. She was, so Bismarck said, 'a satiated power.' She needed peace to consolidate and digest her gains, and to build up her industries. Bismarck himself was loth to allow her even to enter the lists in the colonial rivalry of the period; it was only the pressure of the young colonial party that led him to annex colonial territories. But the ease with which he did so—laying the foundations, within two years, with the deferential assent of the other Powers, of an empire of a million square miles—was evidence of the ascendancy which Germany enjoyed; as was the fact that it was in Berlin that the Conference was held (1884) which laid down the lines of the partition of Africa.

It might seem that Germany had no need to fear any rivals; and Bismarck boasted to the Reichstag that she 'feared God, and nothing else in the world.' Yet Bismarck himself lived in dread: he was 'haunted by the nightmare of coalitions': he could never banish the fear that others might deal with Germany as he himself had dealt with the obstacles in her path to glory; nor could he forget that Napoleon III. had almost concluded an alliance with Austria and Italy in 1870. If Bismarck's fears were genuine, as they seem to have been, their only possible object was France, the proud nation whom he had rolled in the dust in 1870, whom he had been on the point of attacking again in 1875, merely because she was recovering from her wounds too rapidly, and who 'never forgot and never mentioned' the lost provinces. Yet it might have seemed that the Power which 'feared God and nothing else in the world' had small reason to be afraid of France, now. She was disheartened. Her population was dwindling, while that of Germany was mounting by millions every decade. Lacking coal, and having lost her best iron-field when she lost Lorraine, she had little share in the triumphal industrial progress which Germany was making. She was torn asunder by royalist, Bonapartist, and republican factions. Her ministries rose and fell with disconcerting rapidity; her politicians were discredited by scandals and rumours of corruption. And she had no allies.

Yet Bismarck feared her. He encouraged her to throw herself into colonising schemes, in the hope that she would forget Alsace-Lorraine, and quarrel with the other colonising Powers. He laboured to detach from her all possible allies. First of all he made friends with Austria, whom he had treated with careful lenience in 1866. In 1879 he concluded a secret defensive alliance with Austria, whereby Germany's help was pledged to her if she should be attacked by Russia. This alliance became a permanence; and though nominally only defensive, in reality it turned Austria into Germany's vassal, for Austria feared Russia, was gravely weakened by the quarrels of her nationalities, and wanted to devote her attention to Balkan affairs. Another possible ally for France was Italy. Bismarck strove to make this alliance impossible when, at the Berlin Congress, he encouraged France to annex Tunis, on which Italy had set her heart. The French occupation of Tunis drove Italy to join the Austro-German combination (1882).

And now the Triple Alliance, which Germany dominated, stretched from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and made any hostile European combination all but impotent. Long afterwards Germany complained that the Triple Entente 'encircled' her: she had begun by 'excircling' the Powers which later formed it.

But Bismarck had no desire to break with Russia. Friendship with Russia had been the sheet-anchor of Prussian diplomacy ever since 1763; and there was no nightmare which frightened the timid Chancellor more than the possibility that the 'wire to St. Petersburg' might be cut. Russia must not be allowed to make friends with France. In 1884, in spite of his existing defensive alliance with Austria (which was not published until 1888) Bismarck negotiated a secret treaty with Russia which he called the Reinsurance, and by which he pledged Germany not to join Austria in an attack on Russia. So long as this treaty lasted (and it lasted until after Bismarck's fall in 1890), Germany controlled the relations between Austria and Russia, and the possibility of war in the Balkans; neither Power could move without her permission.

The only other possible source of danger was Britain. Bismarck knew well enough that any aggressive action by Britain on the Continent was out of the question, if for no other reason, because Britain did not possess an army on the continental scale. But it was worth while to detach her from France. In 1878 he urged Disraeli to annex Egypt. Disraeli was wise enough not to swallow the bait, knowing that this would fatally alienate France. But the purpose was served when, as we shall see,[1] the chapter of accidents brought Britain into Egypt, and France, fearful of entanglements and with the German peril always before her eyes, refused to join her in common action. For twenty years thereafter, France and Britain were on the worst of terms. And the colonial schemes of France served the same end: as we shall see,[2] they made Britain feel that France was her enemy. Throughout the period of Bismarck's rule, and indeed until much later, Britain docilely accepted the German view of the European situation, regarded Germany with friendliness as a pacific Power, and looked upon France as the disturber of the peace.

No single Power (save Napoleon for a few years) has ever held so dominant a position in Europe as Germany held between 1879 and 1895. Her army was unsurpassable;

[1] Below, Chap. iv. p. 655. [2] Below, Chap. ii. p. 627-8.

she was the head of the most powerful standing alliance which Europe had ever known, an alliance whose compact territories stretched across Europe from sea to sea, and separated all the other Powers from one another. She had a secret alliance with Russia in the East, and a friendly understanding with Britain in the West; her only possible foe was completely isolated. She was the pivot upon which European politics turned, and no serious action could be taken without her assent.

In these circumstances it might seem that Germany could have afforded to reduce her warlike panoply, and to abandon or modify the system of universal military service which she had been the first to introduce, and which her example had forced upon all the other Powers. She alone could safely take such a step, because it was unthinkable that any other Power would dare to attack her. But she never thought of taking it. She had already extended the Prussian military system to all the other German States. At intervals she passed new Army Acts, increasing her standing forces, on the plea that they must always bear a fixed proportion to her growing population. Compulsory military service was, in truth, one of the foundations of the whole German system. It was the main buttress of the Emperor's power over his people, the means of training the German people to regard themselves as a nation in arms, who must be prepared to fight for the glory of the nation whenever the Supreme War-Lord commanded. As fully as in the days of the old Mark or of Frederick the Great, modern Germany, for all her industrial development, was primarily a military Power, which regarded force as the sole secure foundation of national greatness.

Throughout this period Treitschke, Professor of History at Berlin from 1874 to 1896, was making himself the mouthpiece of the Prussian doctrine of militarism; and he was an accepted national prophet. He taught that the essence of the State, and its *raison d'être*, is not Justice but Power; and that the expansion of its power is its 'highest moral obligation,' against which no restraints are valid. He taught that War is the means by which the State expands its power, that it is 'a biological necessity,' and 'the divinely appointed medicine of humanity'; and that it is the destiny of small States to be devoured by great States. The history of Prussia seemed to justify this creed, which is the creed of pure militarism. And in spite of all Bismarck's elaborate, and probably sincere, protestations that he desired only

peace, this was the real creed of the governing elements in Germany. This was the source of the malady from which Europe was suffering. She was dominated by an exultant, progressive and formidable nation which, while unthreatened by any danger that could reasonably be feared, and supported by powerful alliances, was nevertheless armed to the teeth. In the face of this, no other nation, least of all broken France, could safely disarm. We have given to this chapter the title of 'German Hegemony and the Armed Peace.' Is it not apparent that the reason why Peace went panoplied in clanking armour was that Germany held the hegemony of Europe? Under Bismarck she used it wisely and with restraint. But the power she wielded was dangerously great. With the traditions of Prussia in her heart, and the teachings of Treitschke in her ears, she might be tempted to misuse it. And there was one region of Europe which presented continual occasions: more than ever before, the Balkans were simmering with unrest.

§ 4. *The Problems of the Balkans.*

It was one of Bismarck's apophthegms that the Balkans were 'not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier'; and it may be claimed for him that, by means of his strange double agreement with Austria and Russia, he prevented these Powers from being drawn by the politics of the Balkans into a war which might have involved all Europe. Doubtless, peace was his chief aim; but by the time of his fall it is noteworthy that the influence of Russia had been reduced to a minimum in all the Balkan States, and that the most powerful influence, throughout the distressful peninsula, had come to be that of Austria and Germany.

The ink of the Treaty of Berlin was scarcely dry when it began to be apparent that, far from solving the problems of the Balkans, the diplomats who drew up the treaty had only added to the complexity and difficulty of these problems. Throughout this period the Eastern Question was more thorny than it had ever been; the Concert of Europe was called upon, almost every year, to solve one puzzle or another, and to exhibit its own singular futility. Not Constantinople only, but Bucharest, Athens, Belgrad, Sofia became nests of intrigue; for there was not one of the new States which had not its own grievances, and not one which was not worked upon by the intrigues of Great

Powers. It is impossible to narrate in detail the sordid and romantic story of these years. There were intrigues and conspiracies, assassinations and kidnappings, depositions and *coups d'état*, diplomatic strokes and counter-strokes—a complete scenario for a whole library of Ruritanian novels. To many Western observers it all seemed as unreal and as unimportant as comic opera. But it was of profound significance for the future of the world. The seeds of strife which were germinating in the Balkans during these years were to bear fruit in the Great War.

We cannot here attempt to follow the complicated story of Balkan politics, or analyse all the causes of friction which arose from the defects of the Treaty of Berlin, and from the unsatisfied aspirations of all the Balkan States.[1] But certain broad results of the period must be noted. Rumania, long the staunch ally of Russia, had been alienated by Russia's seizure of the province of Bessarabia in 1878; and under her Hohenzollern king she learnt to look to Austria and, still more, to Germany for protection. Serbia had been embittered by her failure to acquire Serb territories in 1878, and her nationalist party was hostile to Austria because Austria had occupied the Serb provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina; but her successive kings and their courts were, down to 1903, Austrian creatures, and were bound to Austria by a secret treaty (1881). Bulgaria, which had been Russia's special protégé in 1878, had been alienated by the high-handed behaviour of the Russian agents, and by the way in which Russia had treated her first prince, Alexander of Battenberg: her second prince, Ferdinand of Coburg, belonged to a German ruling house and had been an officer in the Austrian army; and though he made peace with Russia, it was to Germany and Austria that he chiefly looked. Greece had been angered by the refusal of Russia to obtain for her some of the Greek-speaking lands of the Sultan: in 1889 her heir-apparent married the sister of the German Emperor. Thus every one of the Christian States of the Balkans had been brought directly or indirectly under the influence of Germany and Austria; and the influence of Russia had fallen to the nadir.

Meanwhile Turkey had been undergoing a curious revival. The establishment of Rumania and Serbia as independent States, and the concession of autonomy to Bulgaria, had not really weakened her, but had set up an effective barrier between her and Russia; and the mutual jealousies of

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 28, 6th Edition Plate 86.

the Great Powers afforded her a still further protection. Her throne was now occupied (since 1876) by Abdul Hamid II., a shifty and timid man, but a consummate master of intrigue and evasion. For a generation Abdul Hamid played the Powers off one against another with such dexterity that he enjoyed a freedom to misgovern which none of his predecessors, for a very long time, had known.

Abdul Hamid was not content merely to stave off European interference. He had no patience with the talk about reforms with which Turkey had so long been pestered, and he swept into limbo the beginnings of Western methods of government which had been introduced at the time of the Russo-Turkish War. A great ambition dominated him: he would be the leader of a Mohammedan revival, and make the hopes and dreams of Moslems in all parts of the world once more centre on Constantinople, and on himself as the Caliph, or head of the Moslem faith. From the Yildiz Kiosk, therefore, Abdul Hamid pulled the strings of a vast movement of propaganda, whose influence, almost unperceived by the Western Powers, spread over every part of the Mohammedan world, and stirred the old hatred of the Christians.

The moment was favourable for such an attempt, for various revivalist movements had long been at work in the Islamic world. In a remote oasis of the Libyan desert two prophets, Mohammed ben Senussi and his son Senussi el Mahdi, had founded a mysterious religious order, whose monasteries were widely spread through the Moslem world, especially in Africa. Only one European had ever visited the centre of this organisation: the German explorer, Dr. Nachtigal. The aim of the Senussi was to revive the purity and fervour of the early days of Islam, to weld the whole Moslem world together, and, after spiritual regeneration had been achieved, to liberate Islam from Christian domination. The Senussi had no dealings with Abdul Hamid, but they prepared the soil for him. Meanwhile another Moslem prophet, the Persian Djemal-ed-din, had travelled over every part of the Moslem world, preaching the fundamental antipathy between Christendom and Islam. In 1880 he played a part in the rising of Arabi Pasha, which brought about the British intervention in Egypt. Then he found his way to Constantinople, where he was welcomed by Abdul Hamid, and became the chief organiser of the Sultan's Pan-Islamic propaganda, until his death in 1896.

When a movement of this vast purport was afoot, it was unlikely that the Sultan would allow his policy to be controlled by any of the three European Powers which had hitherto taken turns in directing the policy of the Turks; for Russia, France, and Britain were the three Powers whose conquests had subjugated the world of Islam. But Turkey needed Western military science and Western financial organisation if her power was to be effectively revived. In 1883 she began to borrow German officers to reorganise her army, and invited a German financier to improve her fiscal system.

Plainly the Eastern Question was undergoing a transformation. Its importance no longer lay solely in the rivalry of this Power and that for dominant influence at Constantinople; the problem had become much deeper, and much more variegated. No doubt it is true that Bismarck's diplomacy helped to prevent any serious explosion: he had taken the keys of the powder-magazine, and put them in Germany's keeping. But so far as European politics were concerned, the significant thing was that Britain and Russia, the protagonists of 1878, had ceased to be the main figures in the Balkan scene. When Bismarck fell from power in 1890, the European Powers whose influence counted for most, whether among the little Christian States or with the Turk, were Germany and Austria. And Russia could not but realise the fact.

§ 5. *Kaiser Wilhelm II. and the Dual Alliance.*

In 1888 a new ruler ascended the throne of the German Empire, the Kaiser Wilhelm II. Young, ardent, ineffably self-confident, he reflected the proud temper of the generation which had grown to manhood since Germany became the first Power in Europe. He did not share Bismarck's fears and misgivings, which came from the time when Prussia was a Power of the second rank, with her way to make in the world; he was not afraid of coalitions; he was not, like Bismarck, a 'no-colony man,' or a disbeliever in the desirability of adding naval to military power. Like the men of his generation, he put no limit to the future greatness to which his mighty and prosperous empire might aspire; and he had in his blood the Prussian tradition that greatness depends upon force. He differed from the great Chancellor on many things, on social policy, on colonial policy, and also (though more vaguely) on

foreign policy. Being unquestioned master of his own ship, he dropped the old pilot (1890) and took the helm himself.

At once it became apparent that the temper and methods of German policy were to be changed; and Germany's position in the world was such that this was of the first moment to every nation. One of the first results of the change was that Bismarck's Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, which expired in 1891, was not renewed. The guarantee that Germany would not use her formidable power to Russia's detriment disappeared; and with it disappeared the strongest buttress of European peace which Bismarck had created. Remained only the other part of Bismarck's work: Germany's unsurpassable military power, and her headship of an alliance more formidable than any that Europe had yet known.

Russia was already sore at the imperceptible steps by which—mainly, no doubt, through her own folly—her influence in the Balkans had been weakened, and that of her rival Austria had grown. She now knew that the Austro-German alliance was both solid and permanent. She felt her isolation and looked about for allies. There was another isolated power, France, who lived in dread of her terrible neighbour across the Rhine. The two threatened Powers began to draw together. It seemed unnatural that the mother of the Revolution should become the partner of the most unqualified and oppressive of despotisms, and there was a delay of some years before any formal alliance was concluded. But it was always inevitable that the creation of a group so powerful as the Triple Alliance should bring a counterpoise into being; otherwise the existence of every other land-power must depend upon the discretion of the leaders of this group. In 1891 the *rapprochement* between France and Russia began; in 1895 the existence of a definite defensive alliance between them was revealed. The malady of Europe was reaching a more acute stage: the Continent was divided between two great confederations, each armed *cap-à-pie*, each perpetually in dread lest the other should take advantage of it, each therefore apt to be tempted to seize upon any favourable opportunity of deciding the issue in its favour. Alone among the Great Powers, Britain stood aloof, in 'splendid isolation,' holding (perhaps) the balance between the hostile arrays.

It was a new thing in European history that the Great Powers should be divided into two standing alliances, jealous and fearful of one another; a new thing that the

whole manhood of civilised nations should be trained for war; a new thing that the men who controlled the issues of peace and war should have in their hands forces so potent as those with which science, modern industry, and organised finance endowed them. It was a yet greater portent that these vast powers were being employed, as we shall see in the next chapter, to bring all the unorganised regions of the world under the control of these armed nations, and to extend to every part of the globe their dangerous rivalries. Nor did this end the list of startling transformations which cause the student of this period to feel that he is observing the passage of civilisation into a fresh stage of its development. It was in these same years that Japan emerged as a Great Power, not to be disregarded by the arbiters of world-affairs. And the emergence of Japan was at once a proof of the triumph of European civilisation, and an evidence that the control of the destinies of the now unified world was not to be a monopoly of the Western peoples.

§ 6. *The Emergence of Japan as a Great Power.*

There is nothing in human history more astonishing than the swiftness and success with which, in the course of a very few years, Japan discarded the forms of an ancient and admirable civilisation under which she had lived contentedly for many centuries, and, by an extraordinary effort of the national will, adopted, and adapted to her own needs, a totally different system.

Content with her ancient feudal order, which was based upon a rigid system of castes, Japan had excluded the civilisation and the trade of the West even more completely than China, until, in the middle of the nineteenth century, she was forced to realise the formidable power of the Europeans. Her awakening began with the visit of an American naval squadron in 1853, followed by a second American mission, which insisted upon, and obtained, a concession of trading rights (1858). Britain and other European peoples followed, and the Japanese began to get an insight into the methods of the West. At first there was a natural reaction. But European fleets (British, American, French and Dutch) appeared once and again off Japanese ports, and on two occasions (1863) bombarded them. This completed the demonstration of Western superiority. Japan recognised that in one way or another Western methods must win the ascendancy. By an extraordinary national resolve, she

made up her mind to carry out the necessary changes herself, in her own way; and in 1868 the most astonishing of revolutions began.

The sacred person of the Mikado emerged from his long seclusion to give the sanction of the religion of nationality which he represented to the greatest of national enterprises. Under his venerated ægis, a group of reformers carried out an amazing transformation. The feudatory States lost their governing power. The military caste of the *Samurai* sacrificed their pensions and privileges. The chaos of feudal usages was replaced by a system of civil and criminal law based on European models. Englishmen were brought in to create a navy, and to build railways and lighthouses; Frenchmen to recast the laws and train the army; Americans to organise education and the postal service; Germans to train medical men and organise local government. Within ten years Japan was well on the way to possessing the full equipment of a Western State; and the suppression of a revolt in 1877 against this dizzy series of changes ended the first stage of the transformation. By the date of the Congress of Berlin Japan had definitely launched herself upon her new career.

Europe could not believe that a transformation so rapidly effected could be permanent; and as late as 1885 *The Mikado* was a possible title for a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Indeed, there was much still to be done. The whole structure of the national life had to be adjusted to the new conditions. Industries had to be organised; a banking system and a new currency had to be created; the whole machinery of government had to be adjusted. These labours occupied the next ten years, and more; the culmination came when in 1890 a new constitution was promulgated, and Japan entered the ranks of the parliamentary countries. It is true that her executive still remained, like that of Germany, under the control of the Emperor. But a representative Assembly, elected without regard to the ancient distinctions of caste, was given control over legislation and taxation. Here was a voluntary abandonment of power, by a monarchy which had been absolute since the beginning of things, to which no other country's history presents any parallel. Within twenty-five years an Oriental nation, organised on a caste basis, and governed by a theocratic monarchy and a feudal aristocracy, had so transformed itself that it was ready to take its place among the self-governing industrial nations of the West. Almost without violence it had carried out,

in this short space of time, a transformation which in Europe had taken centuries of war and turmoil.

Europe had still to be persuaded of the reality of this miracle. What brought conviction home was the war between China and Japan, which broke out in 1894 over the question whether Corea was to be regarded as a Chinese dependency or a free State.

China, like Japan, had borrowed some of the externals of Western civilisation. She had created a navy, and reorganised her army, on Western lines. But she had not Westernised her mind, or her system of administration. Her navy and her army were on paper stronger than those of Japan. Yet they were completely defeated; because, unlike the navy and army of Japan, they were not guided by minds which had been trained to use their new instruments. Japan's victory was as swift and efficient as any European Power could have achieved: indeed, the competence with which the whole business was conducted stands in sharp contrast with the ineffectiveness of the earlier British and French campaigns in China. China was compelled, after a campaign of a few months, to recognise the independence of Corea, to cede the island of Formosa, and to hand over to Japan the strategically important Liao-Tang Peninsula, which commands the sea-highways towards Peking.

Europe was startled. The Governments realised that they had to deal with a new Power. And the discovery brought on a period of anxious diplomacy.

[Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations, 1870-1914*; Débidour, *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe, 1878-1904*; Seignobos, *Political History of Contemporary Europe*; Headlam, or Robertson, *Life of Bismarck*; Bismarck, *Recollections and Reflections*; Hanotaux, *Contemporary France* (Eng. trans.); Clapham, *Economic Development of France and Germany*; Marshall, *Industry and Trade*; Dawson, *Evolution of Modern Germany*; Stoddard, *New World of Islam*; Temperley, *History of Serbia*; Forbes and others, *The Balkans*; Marriott, *Eastern Question*; Porter, *Japan*; Cheng, *Modern China*; Okuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan* (Eng. ed.).]

CHAPTER II

THE RACE FOR COLONIAL POSSESSIONS

(A.D. 1878-1904)

§ 1. *The Birth of Imperialism.*

We have seen that after the Franco-German and Russo-Turkish Wars the politics of Europe underwent a marked and rapid change. Not less marked and not less rapid was the change which came about during the same years in the relations between Europe and the non-European world. Suddenly, now that the nationalist and the liberal ideals had won their victory, the European nations shed that indifference to oversea possessions which had marked them ever since 1815. Their new industrial activity and their eagerness for national self-sufficiency led them to desire territories under their own control, whence they could draw supplies of raw materials, and whose markets they could reserve to their own traders. They realised also that while Europe had been immersed in its domestic problems, three great world-empires had come into being which seemed to dwarf the European nation-States as completely as the unified France and Spain of the sixteenth century had dwarfed the Italian city-States. These three were the Russian Empire, which extended in a solid mass from Central Europe to the Pacific; the United States, which stretched across a whole continent from ocean to ocean; and the British Empire, which sprawled over the world, on every continent and in every ocean. To attain the rank of world-States came to seem an indispensable sign of greatness. The great European States set out, therefore, upon this career, and a period of intense rivalry began, more intense even than that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. So strenuous were the colonising activities of these years that within two decades practically all the available territories of the world were parcelled out, and the destinies of humanity seemed to lie in the hands of a group of half-a-dozen huge world-empires, whose

interests came into conflict with one another in every part of the earth.

In face of this eager imperialism, Britain rapidly abandoned the attitude of unwillingness to extend her imperial responsibilities which she had adopted during the middle years of the century. At first she stood aloof, and even welcomed the advent of other Powers as partners in the task of civilising the backward races. Then, realising that wide lands in which her trade had hitherto been dominant were passing under the control of Governments which would exclude her traders by tariff walls, she woke up, and took a very active part in the scramble. And her advantages were so great that she acquired new dominions more extensive than any of her rivals save France, and far more valuable than those of France. All these new dominions were in tropical lands inhabited by primitive and backward peoples—a kind of responsibility which Britain had hitherto been very loth to assume. They were so distinctive in character, and so vast in extent, that they may be described as the Third British Empire.

The awakening of Europe to the value of oversea possessions came just at the moment when the labours of great explorers, which we have described in an earlier chapter,[1] had revealed the rich potentialities of Africa. It was to Africa, therefore, that the conquering Powers first turned; and the engineering skill and medical knowledge with which science had endowed them enabled them to overcome, with extraordinary ease, the obstacles which had hitherto kept Europe aloof from the dark continent.

§ 2. *The First Stages of the Partition of Africa and the Conference of Berlin.*

From the point of view of its relations with Europe, Africa falls into two distinct sections.[2] The Northern or Mediterranean coastal belt has been, throughout the course of history, almost a part of Europe: it was all included in the Roman Empire, and later in the successive Mohammedan Empires with which Europe has long had close relations. But this coastal belt was separated from the main mass of Africa by a broad belt of desert, the most impenetrable of geographical barriers. For that reason the adventures of European Powers on the Northern Coast

[1] Above, Bk. x. chap. v. p. 540.
[2] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*a*), 6th Edition Plate 88.

have been far more directly connected with European politics than their adventures in the main mass of the continent; and it will be convenient to touch upon Northern Africa first.

In this region France had long been deeply concerned. She had conquered Algeria during the years following 1830, and had carried out there a great work of reorganisation. She had also taken a special interest in the politics of Egypt ever since the time of Napoleon. When she began to recover from the terrible blow she had endured in 1870-1871, it was to Northern Africa that she turned for consolation, and for the means of reviving her power and prestige. As we have seen, she annexed Tunis in 1881. But the immediate result of the annexation was that Italy was driven into the arms of Germany, and France's isolation in Europe became worse than ever. Evidently North Africa was a dangerous field for colonial activity. This was the main reason why France, fearing European complications, declined to join hands with Britain in intervening to restore order in Egypt in 1882. The British occupation of Egypt has had such remarkable and important results that we must devote to it a separate chapter,[1] and shall not deal with it here. But it was the chief cause of twenty years of friction between France and Britain. Thus intervention in Northern Africa was shown to be so dangerous, because of its nearness to Europe, that no Power ventured to touch it again until after 1904; and then, as we shall see,[2] the intervention of France in Morocco and of Italy in Tripoli were to prove just as fruitful of discord as the earlier intervention in Tunis and Egypt had been.

But in tropical Africa there was a clearer field; and it was here that the competition was most furious. It was begun, curiously enough, by Leopold, King of the Belgians. In 1876 Leopold summoned an unofficial conference at Brussels to consider how the opening up of Africa could best be carried out. He seems sincerely to have desired that the work should be done on an international basis; and if this had been possible many future troubles would have been avoided. An International African Association was established, with Leopold as its President, and branches for each country. But the branches thought of nothing but their national interests, and the main body became in practice a purely Belgian organisation. When H. M.

[1] Below, Chap. iv. p. 652. [2] Below, Bk. XII. chap. iii.

Stanley returned in 1878 from his remarkable exploration of the Congo, Leopold engaged him to return to the Congo, and to organise there a system of administration under the auspices of the Association. This was the beginning of the Congo Free State (1879).

But Leopold's enterprise, professedly international as it was, was not allowed to go unchallenged. A French explorer, de Brazza, had been investigating the lands north of the Congo, and, with the support of the French Government, he proceeded to lay claim to these lands (1880); it was only with difficulty that conflict between him and Stanley was avoided. Meanwhile the Portuguese had put forward a claim that all this coast belonged to them, by right of ancient settlement; they even claimed that their dominion extended right across Africa, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, because they had decaying settlements on both coasts.[1] Here were already the beginnings of serious trouble. The scramble had fairly begun.

Nor was this all. The French had retained, in 1815, a post at the mouth of the Senegal River, on the West Coast,[2] and their explorers had long been gradually pushing their way up the river's course. It led them into the heart of the Western Sudan. 'Sudan' is the Arab name for 'negro-land,' and the vast region known by that name stretches almost across Africa, south of the desert belt, from Cape Verde to Abyssinia. Parts of it, especially in the upper valley of the Niger, about Timbuktu, and round Lake Chad, are fertile and populous; and here France saw the possibility of acquiring a great tropical empire, which might eventually extend from ocean to ocean. Between 1880 and 1884 she made innumerable treaties with native chiefs on the West Coast, whereby they accepted her protection. The British merchants on the coast took alarm. They feared especially that they might lose the valuable oil-trade of the lower Niger. In 1879, led by Sir George Taubman Goldie, they had consolidated their interests in a United African Company. By 1884 they had bought out the French traders, and established British influence on the lower Niger.

Italy also was beginning to be active: in 1882 she planted herself on the Red Sea Coast, in the region which afterwards grew into the colony of Eritrea. And a more serious competitor had also entered the lists. Germany had held back at first because Bismarck did not believe in colonies.

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*a*), 6th Edition Plate 88.
[2] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*c*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*c*).

But an active colonial party had grown up in Germany, and under its pressure Bismarck began to take action. In 1883 a German merchant named Lüderitz landed on the coast of South-West Africa, near the British settlement of Walvish Bay, where some German missionaries were at work, and made a treaty with a native chief. Cape Colony was alarmed; but the British Government made no objection, and in 1884 Germany formally announced that she had taken 'the territory belonging to Mr. Lüderitz' under her protection. In 1884 also the famous German explorer, Dr. Nachtigal, visited the West Coast to inquire into 'the condition of German trade,' and the British Government was formally notified of his mission. Its real purpose was revealed when he concluded a treaty with the King of Togoland whereby that monarch placed himself under German protection, and a whole series of treaties with the chiefs of the Cameroons, who had repeatedly begged in vain for British protection. This aroused the British Government, which promptly declared a protectorate over the coast of Nigeria, the chief sphere of British trade in that region (1884).

Thus, within five years of the time when King Leopold despatched Stanley to the Congo, half-a-dozen European Powers had pegged out claims in various parts of Africa; and there was room for infinite controversy and friction among the rivals.[1] To avoid this danger, a Conference was summoned at Berlin at the end of 1884. It was attended by representatives of fourteen Powers, including the United States; and it devoted itself, in three months of strenuous discussion, to laying down the rules of the game of partition.

The Conference of Berlin had before it the opportunity of doing a noble piece of work. It might have established a sort of trusteeship on behalf of the civilised world over the lands inhabited by the backward peoples. It might have safeguarded the primitive peoples against exploitation, and at the same time insisted upon an open door for the trade of all nations; and if these principles could have been laid down, and some means found for enforcing them, the process of colonisation would have been wholly beneficial to the world, and the danger of conflict between the colonising Powers would have been reduced to a minimum. It did not venture upon any such ambitious programme; perhaps it could not have done so, in the then state of European ideas about international trade rivalry.

[1] The extent of these claims is indicated on the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*a*), 6th Edition Plate 88.

Yet the Conference achieved much. It required the maintenance of free trade in the Congo valley, though not elsewhere; it laid down the rules of navigation on the great rivers; and it defined the principles on which the game of empire-making should in future be conducted. It recognised the annexations already made, including the Congo Free State, which differed from the rest in that it was not directly annexed to any single State. It ordained that every Power, on assuming a protectorate, should notify all the rest, and that no occupation should be valid unless it was 'effective.' This debarred such vast and vague claims as had been put forward by Portugal. But it also ensured that all the Powers should make haste to make their occupation 'effective' over as large an area as possible, and therefore opened a decade of extraordinary activity and of feverish diplomacy. This much at least may be claimed for the Europe of the 'eighties, that it succeeded in carrying out peacefully an amazing work of partition which in any earlier period would assuredly have led to war.

§ 3. *The Process of Partition in Africa.*

It is needless to attempt any detailed survey of the strenuous work of the twenty years following the Conference of Berlin, during which the whole of Africa, except Abyssinia, Liberia, Tripoli and Morocco, was partitioned out among the Powers. But the main feature of the period was that after about 1886 Britain played a more active part than any of the other Powers. She had at first been loth to intervene; she had even welcomed the participation of the other Powers, and notably of Germany. For the Gladstone ministry, which was in power in Britain from 1880 to 1885, still clung to the view that it was undesirable to assume further imperial responsibilities. It had gone into Egypt, it is true, but with the sincere intention of withdrawing at the earliest possible moment; and it had insisted upon the abandonment of the Egyptian Sudan. It had assumed a protectorate over the Nigerian coast, but only under heavy pressure from commercial interests. Its attitude was clearly expressed in the negotiations with Germany about East Africa in 1885.

At the end of 1884, while the Conference of Berlin was sitting, Karl Peters and two other young Germans, disguised as mechanics, had landed on the coast opposite to Zanzibar with a number of blank treaty-forms, for which

they proceeded to obtain the signatures of chiefs. All this territory was regarded as subject to the Sultan of Zanzibar. Its trade had been almost wholly in the hands of British and Indian merchants; and the Sultan and the chiefs had in vain petitioned to be taken under British protection. In spite of the vehement protestations of the Sultan, the German Government declared a protectorate over the lands which its unauthorised agents had acquired (1885), and sent a fleet to enforce its claims. Britain, far from opposing, declared through Lord Granville that she 'viewed with favour these schemes, the realisation of which will entail the civilisation of large tracts over which hitherto no European influence has been exercised.'

Meanwhile, farther north, a group of British merchants, alarmed at the prospect of losing a valuable trade, had begun to make treaties with chiefs in the Kenya district: they were the pioneers of the British East Africa Company. The British Government refused to support them until it was assured that Germany made no objection; and in 1886 the line of division between the two spheres was defined by agreement between Britain and Germany. Thus the four German colonies in Africa—South-West Africa, Togoland, the Cameroons and East Africa—were all acquired in regions where British trade had hitherto been predominant, and with Britain's full concurrence.

In 1886, however, the Gladstone ministry was replaced by that of Lord Salisbury, and a different temper appeared. It was under Salisbury's guidance, in truth, that what we have called 'the Third British Empire' was acquired. The rapid expansion of this period was mainly due to a significant revival of the methods of the seventeenth century by the establishment of Chartered Companies, three of which (the Royal Niger Company, the East Africa Company, and the South Africa Company) played an extremely important part in obtaining concessions from native chieftains, and in opening up the occupied country for trade and settlement. But they were heartily backed by the British Government; and their acquisitions were secured by treaties with the various Powers engaged in the game of empire-building. As Britain was the only Power whose interests were engaged in every part of Africa, she had to make treaty settlements with all the colonising Powers—with Germany, France, Portugal, Italy and the Congo Free State; and these treaties formed the chief factors in the process of partition.

With Germany the settlement was early and easily made.

A treaty of 1890 defined the limits of the three chief German colonies, and allotted to Britain a protectorate over British East Africa and Uganda; she was also recognised as suzerain of the Sultan of Zanzibar, in return for the cession of Heligoland. In 1894 a treaty between France and Germany completed the definition of the German dominions. As the result of ten years' work Germany had acquired, with extraordinary ease and without friction or opposition, an empire of nearly 1,000,000 square miles.

Agreement between Britain and France was found to be much more difficult, for the interests of France and Britain came much more sharply into conflict. In 1885 France asserted a sort of protectorate over the rich and beautiful island of Madagascar, though she did not actually subjugate it until 1895. But British traders and missionaries had been very active in Madagascar, and in 1865 Britain and France had agreed to recognise the independence of the island. Here was one cause of friction. Again, in North-West Africa the French claims were so far-reaching—extending from the Mediterranean to the Guinea Coast—that French territory threatened to hem in the far older British possessions, reducing them to mere isolated *enclaves*; on the Niger, especially, the competition of the two Powers was fierce and continuous. In 1890, however, a treaty was negotiated which settled both of these disputes. The French protectorate over Madagascar was recognised; the position of the British West African colonies as mere *enclaves* within the French Empire was in effect accepted; but Britain emerged from the negotiations in control of a magnificent domain in Nigeria, the richest trading region of that part of Africa.[1]

But the treaty of 1890 by no means brought the friction with France to an end. The northern boundary of Nigeria had not been laid down; and on this question friction became so acute that in 1898 it very nearly led to open conflict. A treaty of that year settled this problem; but the ink of the signatures was scarcely dry when a new and far more serious controversy broke out. Having now acquired most of the Central as well as the Western Sudan, France conceived the ambition of extending her empire over the Eastern Sudan, until it should reach the Red Sea. But between 1896 and 1898 British and Egyptian forces were reconquering the Eastern, or Egyptian, Sudan.[2] To anticipate them, Major Marchand was sent with a small

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (a), 6th Edition Plate 88.
[2] See below, Chap. iv. p. 658.

force from French Congoland across to the Nile valley, where he raised the French flag at Fashoda in July 1898, only a few weeks before Lord Kitchener shattered the Mahdi's host at Omdurman and occupied Khartoum. It was held that no foreign Power could be permitted to control the Upper Nile, whose waters are the very life-blood of Egypt. Kitchener was therefore sent post-haste to Fashoda, where he politely insisted upon the lowering of the French flag. This episode aroused such intense feeling in France that for some weeks war with Britain appeared to be inevitable; no event in the partition of Africa came so near to precipitating a European conflict. But France gave way; and the treaty whereby she recognised British control of the Nile valley (1899) practically marked the conclusion of the feverish process by which a whole continent had been parcelled out among a group of Powers. France was left with an African empire of nearly 4,000,000 square miles, almost all in a single coherent mass.

Meanwhile there had been sharp conflict between Britain and her ancient ally Portugal, who insisted on her claim to control the whole continent from East to West, south of the Congo basin. This claim included the whole valley of the Zambezi, which Livingstone had discovered, the rich countries of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, and the district of Lake Nyasa, where British missionaries were doing admirable work.[1] The British Government in 1887 formally refused to admit Portugal's claim. In 1888 a British commissioner signed a protectorate treaty with Lobengula, King of the Matabele; and in 1889 the bold and masterful Cecil Rhodes obtained from the British Government a charter for the British South Africa Company, which proceeded to occupy and organise the wide and rich country of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, later known as Rhodesia. In the same year a British protectorate was also declared over Nyasaland. These events made it necessary to reach some understanding with Portugal; and in 1890 and 1891, though Portugal struggled and protested, she was compelled to accept a settlement whereby the limits of her domains on the East Coast and on the West were clearly defined. The settlement left her with an African empire of more than three-quarters of a million square miles.

The last of the colonising Powers in Africa of whom mention need be made was Italy. She had established a post on the Red Sea coast in 1882; she extended it, with

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*a*) and (*d*), 6th Edition Plates 88 and 89 (*a*).

British support, into the colony of Eritrea during the following years; and in 1889 and 1890 she proclaimed a protectorate over the greater part of Somaliland, the horn of Africa. Between her two colonies lay a part of Somaliland opposite to Aden, which Britain had annexed in 1884-1886. Treaties of 1891 and 1894 between Britain and Italy defined the limits of these various colonies. But Eritrea and Somaliland lay on either side of the mountain kingdom of Abyssinia, a Christian State, and the one semi-civilised Power which Africa contained. Italy's hope was that she might bring this fine country under her control. In 1889, after some years of sharp fighting, she thought she had achieved her aim, for the Emperor of Abyssinia signed a treaty which could be construed as the acceptance of a protectorate. But the hope was doomed to disappointment: the Emperor denounced the treaty, war broke out afresh, and in 1896 Italy suffered a disastrous defeat at Adowa, which compelled her to abandon her ambitions. This was the only defeat inflicted upon any of the colonising Powers during these years of aggressive activity; and Abyssinia was the only African State which was able, by its own strength, to maintain its independence. Abyssinia has since been an active centre of slave-raiding.

§ 4. *Effects of the Partition of Africa.*

The partition of Africa, which was carried out between 1880 and 1900, was no mere paper partition. With remarkable rapidity the conquering Powers introduced the elements of law and government over vast regions which no white man had ever visited when the period began. The incessant warfare of savage tribes was for the most part brought to an end. The slave-trade, if it was not wholly destroyed, at any rate ceased to be openly carried on. Many cruel and barbarous usages were prohibited. Modern communications opened up the country: roads were made, railways began to be built, steamboats plied on the rivers and the great lakes. Reversing the usual order, the trader and the missionary followed in the wake of the administrator; schools and churches were opened; science tackled the diseases of the tropics; the primitive peoples of Africa were introduced to new ways of life, and invited to earn by peaceful labour the means of buying new comforts and conveniences which they had never known before. In all these ways the subjugation of Africa by Europe was unquestionably a good

thing. It brought within the pale of civilisation a great region of the earth, whose inhabitants had been stagnant in barbarism for innumerable centuries, and showed no sign of emancipating themselves by their own efforts.

But a transformation so great and so rapid could not be effected without evil as well as good results. It was not pure philanthropy which brought the European peoples into Africa. They thought primarily of their own advantage; and precautions were necessary if the primitive peoples were to be safeguarded against exploitation and oppression. It was impossible for Governments to keep effective control even over their own agents, not to speak of irresponsible traders, in the vast regions they had taken under their care. European administrators were tempted to be unduly impatient with the usages of their primitive subjects, and to sweep them too lightly aside. Moreover the elaborate machinery of European government was costly, and the attempt to make the subject populations pay the cost was apt to lead to oppression.

The justice and efficiency of the new administrations varied widely from one colony to another. There were difficulties everywhere; that was inevitable. But the worst evils occurred in the regions controlled by countries which had no experience of dealing with backward peoples. In the Congo Free State Leopold of Belgium, who was practically an autocrat, seems to have begun with the highest intentions. But after the first decade of his administration he succumbed to the temptation of making wealth quickly; and he introduced a pitiless system of forced labour, supported by cruel punishments, which after a time aroused the conscience of Europe. The plain truth was that colonial possessions in Africa could not be made to yield great profits—could not even be made to pay their way—without forcing the bewildered natives into modes of life which they resented and disliked.

In the German colonies the same thing was exhibited in a different way. The stiff and unbending German official, with his elaborate rules and his insistence upon precise obedience, could not win the affection of his puzzled and frightened subjects. There were repeated revolts in East Africa, in the Cameroons, and in South-West Africa; and they were crushed with cruel harshness. German colonial government was in many ways highly efficient. But it was always military, and involved the training of large bodies of natives to arms. And it was excessively costly; none of

the German colonies, save Togoland, was ever able to pay its way, even though practical freedom of trade was allowed in order to encourage rapid development.

The French have always shown skill and tact in dealing with subject peoples, and they succeeded in a remarkable degree in winning the confidence of their subjects throughout their vast African empire. But, like the Germans, they were very military in their methods, enlisting and training far larger bodies of men than were needed for the maintenance of order. They definitely meant to use their colonies as a means of enlarging their man-power for war. Moreover the French Government imposed upon their vast empire a rigidly protectionist policy. Regarding themselves as trustees, not on behalf of the civilised world, but solely on behalf of the French people, they strove by means of high tariffs to reserve their colonial markets for French traders. The result was that the trade of their empire grew slowly, and its revenues were quite inadequate to meet the cost of administration. The French colonies have proved a continual drain on the resources of the mother-country—like the German colonies, though for somewhat different reasons.

There were cases of commercial exploitation and of insufficient tenderness for native usages in the new British dominions, as in other lands. But there is no doubt that the British colonial system was, on the whole, far more successful than its rivals. It would have been surprising if this had not been so, seeing that Britain had a far wider experience of the problem than any other State. Two principles had become, as we have seen, part of the British colonial tradition during the nineteenth century. The one, implanted by the missionaries, was that it was the duty of the supreme Government to safeguard the rights and property of natives, and to protect their usages so far as they were not immoral; and in every British protectorate the representatives of the home Government were bound always to keep this principle in mind. The other principle, which flowed from the economic policy adopted by the mother-country herself, was that the traders of all nations ought to be admitted on equal terms, and that tariffs should be imposed for revenue only, not for the creation of monopolies. These principles were the secret of Britain's success in the intense rivalry of this period. On the one hand, the native subjects found that, while they were forced to behave peaceably, they were less interfered with than under other Governments, and they learnt to appreciate the reign of

law without identifying it with vexatious restrictions. Except among the Matabele and in Somaliland, there were no risings or rebellions of any importance in any part of the new British empire. On the other hand, the traders of all nations, being freely admitted to the markets of these British dominions, were fain to recognise that the annexation of lands by Britain did not involve for them any restrictions, but rather an increase of facilities for trade. And that is why there was so little objection to the enormous expansion which this generation witnessed in Britain's already immense empire.

Our experience of European administration in Africa is still too short to justify confident generalisations about its results. But when we reflect upon the ugly and stagnant barbarism which had been revealed by Livingstone and his great colleagues in exploration; when we realise that in some degree the reign of law has been established, that cruel and degraded usages have been prohibited, and that the worst iniquities of the slave-trade has been brought to an end, it seems reasonable to assert that the evils by which the process of European conquest was accompanied have been far more than balanced by the good which it has wrought. The volume of human suffering has been diminished; the resources of a vast continent have been made available for the service of man. Whatever its motives, and whatever its methods, the European conquest of Africa was a great achievement, and a long step towards the unification of the world.

§ 5. *Farther India, the Malay Archipelago, and the Pacific.*

The rivalry of the European Powers was by no means limited to Africa. It extended to every region where unoccupied territories were available for exploitation.

In Farther India, a British protectorate was willingly accepted by a group of States in the Malay Peninsula, which came to be known as the Federated Malay States; and even those States which remained outside the federation recognised a vague British suzerainty. On the other side of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, France was very active in Annam, Tongking and Cochin China, where she had had interests since the eighteenth century. A hard-fought and costly war in Tongking (1882-5) ended in the recognition of a French protectorate over these lands. But the

extension of French influence did not stop here, and ten years later a new war of conquest brought France into violent conflict with the kingdom of Siam. Peace was made in 1893; but it seemed likely that Siam would pass entirely under French influence. In 1896, however, a treaty between France and Britain defined the boundaries of the three Powers in this region, and secured the independence of Siam by placing it under the guarantee of a European treaty.

In the Malay Archipelago Holland, stimulated by the fear that the aggressive Powers might invade a sphere which she had hitherto kept to herself, showed great activity in extending her authority over all the islands of the archipelago, and in improving her system of administration. She had but one rival in this field; but this rival was the omnipresent power of Britain, which, beside holding Singapore and the Malay Peninsula, had got a foothold in the great island of Borneo. As early as 1841 a remarkable Englishman, Sir James Brooke, had established himself as Raja of Sarawak on the north-east coast of Borneo, and he and his successors had achieved a striking success in organising peace and law over a wide expanse of territory. Sarawak, while retaining its independent administration, was brought under a British protectorate. So was its neighbour, the tiny Sultanate of Brunei. And in 1881 a British North Borneo Company was organised to develop a large territory of some 30,000 square miles. The whole extent of the north-east coast of Borneo thus passed under British control.[1]

There remained the innumerable islands of the Pacific, the last field open for colonial development. Here Britain had hitherto been almost omnipotent, though she had as yet annexed nothing but Fiji. France had taken New Caledonia, which, to the indignation of the Australians, she had turned into a penal settlement; she had also annexed Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands. The United States exercised an informal protectorate over the islands of Hawaii. But all the other innumerable scattered gems were unoccupied. Many of them were afflicted by the labour-trade, of which we have said something in an earlier chapter;[2] and those who had given most attention to the subject insisted that the only remedy for this evil was the establishment in all the islands of responsible and efficient government. Britain had hitherto refused to listen to this argument, being loth to take upon her laden shoulders the responsibility for

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 60, 6th Edition Plates 82 and 83.
[2] Bk. x. chap. v. p. 539.

lands and peoples so remote. But she was not permitted to act on this view of her interests. Other British realms were concerned in the Pacific. Australia and New Zealand, thinly peopled and conscious of the difficulty of defending themselves against attack, were resolved that no other Power should be permitted to plant itself among the Pacific Isles, and perhaps to turn them into naval bases. It was the pressure of Australia and New Zealand which led to British annexations in this region; and their special concern was recognised by the transfer to them of responsibility for the administration of many of these new territories.

But what began the process was the appearance of Germany in these waters. In 1882 a German colonial society began to agitate for the annexation of Eastern New Guinea as the foundation of a colonial empire. Queensland, next neighbour to New Guinea, took alarm, demanded that the British Government should annex, and sent an official to carry out a provisional annexation; while the other Australian colonies and New Zealand backed the demand, and asked for the annexation of Pacific islands as well. But the British Government would not act, even in face of a joint protest by all the agents-general of the colonies. Then Bismarck announced his intention of annexing Northern New Guinea, upon which Britain promptly responded by declaring a protectorate over the south coast (1884). The German flag was hoisted not only in New Guinea but in the islands now christened the Bismarck Archipelago; and New Britain and New Ireland changed their names to New Pomerania and New Hanover. This was followed by a treaty like those which had marked the stages in the partition of Africa (1886); a group of archipelagoes in the north were assigned to the German sphere, Samoa and two other islands were left neutral, and Germany agreed not to interfere elsewhere in the Pacific.

During the Salisbury régime Britain began to be busy in the annexation of islands within this vast 'sphere of influence.' Between 1886 and the end of the century more than a hundred Pacific islands were annexed to the British Empire. Many of them were placed under the control of New Zealand, which became the centre of a far-scattered island-empire. But in 1899 Samoa, which had become dear to the English-speaking world as the home of R. L. Stevenson, was annexed by Germany and the United States, with Britain's assent. Meanwhile the United States had formally annexed the Hawaii group in the Northern Pacific

(1898), where her influence had been dominant since 1875. All the myriad islands of the great ocean were now divided among six Powers—Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Spain and Chile. A final change came in 1898 when the United States went to war with Spain, and, as the fruits of victory, annexed Porto Rico in the West Indies, and the Philippine Archipelago in the China Sea. Thus America, coming for a moment out of her isolation, took her place among the imperialist Powers.

The partition of the Pacific took place much more quietly, and aroused far less discussion, than the contemporaneous partition of Africa. But it was still more complete, and on the whole its results were beneficent. Peace and law now reigned among the islands, many of which had been disturbed by tribal wars, and many by the cruelties which had accompanied the Kanaka labour-traffic. These evils disappeared; and perhaps this was a compensation for the fact that in the romantic Pacific, as in almost every other part of the world, the rival world-empires now watched one another suspiciously and in arms.

There now remained no fields in which the imperialist ambitions of Europe could find further satisfaction save South America, which was barred to them by the Monroe doctrine, the Near East, where the decrepit Turkish Power was showing a new vigour under the influence of the Mohammedan revival, and the Far East, where the new Power of Japan was just rising above the horizon. But the problems raised in these regions were so wide in their range, that they will be best left to a later chapter.[1] In them lay some of the seeds of trouble which produced the Great War.

§ 6. *The Third British Empire and the World-States.*

Even a brief and desiccated summary of the feverish colonising activity of the European Powers during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, such as we have given above, brings out in bold relief one outstanding fact. Britain had very completely shaken off the unwillingness to assume new imperial responsibilities which had marked her policy during the middle years of the century. Entering upon the competition with reluctance, she had ended by taking a richer and more valuable share of the unoccupied regions of the world than any of her rivals. In actual area, indeed, France had obtained a larger share, adding some

[1] Below, Chap. ix. p. 720.

4,000,000 square miles to her existing extra-European dominions during the twenty years; but a large part of this great total consisted of the barren and useless Sahara desert. The additions made to the British Empire during the same period amounted to some 3,500,000 square miles; but these territories were, for the most part, far more valuable than those of France, and much more varied in character. Germany, the latest of the competitors in the colonial sphere, had acquired, in Africa and the Pacific, about 1,000,000 square miles—less than one-third of the new additions to the already gigantic British Empire, and only about one-quarter of the acquisitions of her defeated rival, France. It was natural that in an era when the ambition of world-power had taken possession of men's minds, and when the European stage had come to seem relatively insignificant, patriotic Germans should be dissatisfied with the share of the earth's surface which had fallen to their lot, and should feel that it did not correspond with the might, the wealth and the energy of their country.

In particular it might well seem that the British Commonwealth, already the most gigantic political structure that human history had known, had got more than its fair share. In Western Africa it had secured (in addition to substantial enlargements of the old colonies of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast) the great new colony and protectorate of Nigeria, which offered the richest opportunities for trade in all that part of the continent. In the south-central region it had secured the lake district of Nyasaland, and the wide lands of Rhodesia, the southern part of which was one of the few remaining regions suitable for the settlement of white men. In the east it had acquired the fertile uplands of British East Africa (now Kenya colony), the protectorate of Uganda, which controlled the sources of the Nile, and the coastal region of Somaliland. To all this it had added an irregular but effective control over Egypt, and had set up a *condominium* with Egypt over the Eastern Sudan, much of which is a fertile and well-watered region: thus the whole valley of the Nile, from source to mouth, was under British control; and, apart from the interruption presented by German East Africa, there was a continuous expanse of territory under British control, stretching from the north to the extreme south of the continent. Already, before the century closed, the dream of a Cape-to-Cairo railway, which the grandiose imagination of Cecil Rhodes had conceived, had been brought long stages towards realisation, and the

steel rails which were one day to bind all Africa together had been brought far up the valley of the Nile at one end of the line, and northwards as far as Rhodesia at the other end. And to the African lands had to be added the Malay Peninsula, the rich coast-lands of Borneo, a large section of New Guinea, and more than one hundred islands in the Pacific—all brought within the British Empire during these twenty years.

In two respects this third empire differed from its predecessors. Its lands (apart from Egypt, which did not strictly belong to it) were inhabited by backward peoples; it included neither white men's lands like Canada and Australia, nor realms of ancient civilisation like India. Hitherto the British Commonwealth had included scarcely any territories so exclusively occupied by uncivilised tribes; and therefore the problems which the new empire presented were largely of a new kind. The second new feature was the fact that substantial parts of these lands had been acquired because of the insistence of the adolescent daughter-nations, and were governed in intimate relationship with them. British New Guinea was placed under the direct control of Queensland; many of the Pacific Islands were handed over to New Zealand; and the British South Africa Company, which controlled Rhodesia, though not directly connected with the Government of Cape Colony, was linked with that Dominion through its founder, Cecil Rhodes.

When the nineteenth century came to its end, a transformation of a remarkable kind had taken place in the political system of the world. The European peoples appeared to have taken control of the whole world's destiny, and to have brought all the peoples of the earth within the orbit of a single political system; in external and material things, at any rate, the civilisation of Europe had become the civilisation of the world. Five great world-States divided between them more than half of the land-surface of the globe, and the fortunes of all the other peoples depended in no small degree upon the relations of these five.

In area and in population alike the British Commonwealth was far the greatest of the five; its 12,000,000 square miles formed nearly one-quarter of the world's area, and its 400,000,000 inhabitants nearly one-quarter of the world's population. Next came the Russian Empire, with 8,500,000 square miles, inhabited by about one-twelfth of the human race. The United States ranked third in population, with

about one-sixteenth of the human race, and over 3,500,000 square miles of area, but with a vague hegemony over the whole continent of South America. France had taken the fourth place, with nearly 4,500,000 square miles, and a population of 95,000,000; Germany the fifth, with only 1,250,000 square miles and a population of some 70,000,000, but with a strong and dominating position at the head of a great European alliance.

We have set forth these crude figures because they give a very vivid impression of the emergence of a group of giant empires, girdling the globe, which was the greatest portent of the end of the nineteenth century. These figures, though they give a not unjust conception of the share of responsibility for the governance of the world which these vast political structures had undertaken, give, of course, no guidance at all as to the relative strength, weight, influence and leadership which belonged to them. Moreover they leave out of account the Mohammedan peoples of the Near East, in the Turkish and Persian Empires, politically decrepit and disorganised, but strong with the binding force of their religion, which was reviving something of its old fervour. They leave out of account, also, the great yellow races of China and Japan, more than 400,000,000 souls of high civilisation and unexhausted industry and vitality.

The next era of human history was to be concerned with the complicated interrelations of the five great world-States which the European peoples had built up, and their dealings with the Mohammedan peoples and with the peoples of China and Japan. The history of civilisation was definitely passing, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, out of the European stage, and into a greater stage in which the interdependence of all the peoples of the world was to be more and more clearly demonstrated. And in that gigantic drama the world-wide British Commonwealth, forced out of its comparative isolation, could not but play a momentous part.

[Keltie, *Partition of Africa*; Johnston, *Colonisation of Africa*; Hertslet, *Map of Africa by Treaty*; Lugard, *Rise of our East African Empire*; Lady Lugard, *A Tropical Dependency*; Williams, *Cecil Rhodes*; Burton, *Fiji of To-day*; Thomson, *The Fijians*; Rogers, *Historical Geography of Australasia*; Lucas, *Historical Geography of West Africa*; St. John, *Rajah Brooke*; Clifford, *Further India*; Swettenham, *British Malaya*; Selous, *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia*; Wiart, *Les Grandes Compagnies Coloniales Anglaises au XIX^e Siècle.*]

CHAPTER III

THE DOWNFALL OF LIBERALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF IRELAND

(A.D. 1880-1895)

§ 1. *The Second Gladstone Ministry.*

When Gladstone won his great electoral triumph in 1880 [1] and formed his second ministry, most men believed that the long spell of Liberal ascendancy, which had been temporarily broken in 1874, was going to be resumed. Gladstone's personal prestige was at its height. Though he was over seventy, his powers seemed to be undimmed. He stood forth, not only in Britain but in the eyes of all Europe, as the supreme exponent of a view of national policy antithetical to that of Bismarck; he seemed to have convinced a majority of his countrymen that their true interests lay not in the assertion and extension of their power, but in the maintenance of peace, in domestic reform, and in abstention from all avoidable enlargements of their external responsibilities. He was at the head of an enthusiastic and well-disciplined party; since 1877 an elaborate party organisation had been wrought out, which covered every part of the country with an efficiency previously unknown. His Cabinet included an unusual number of men of exceptional ability; and among these the Birmingham Radical, Joseph Chamberlain, promised to be a fighting leader scarcely inferior to Gladstone himself. There seemed to be every reason to anticipate that the ministry of 1880 would have a triumphant career, and win the lasting loyalty of the democracy.

In the result these expectations were completely falsified. The Parliament of 1880 saw the beginning of the downfall of Liberalism, and was the prelude to a long period of Conservative ascendancy. This was in the main due to the emergence of new forces and problems which sharply

[1] See above, p. 597.

differentiated the last quarter of the nineteenth century from the preceding age, and in face of which traditional Liberalism was bewildered and divided. In British politics, as clearly as in European and extra-European affairs, there was a marked change of atmosphere which became fully perceptible during the 'eighties.

The most obvious change was the new form which the eternal Irish problem was assuming under the guidance of Parnell. From 1880 onwards Irish questions dominated British politics, and the Irish difficulty was to be the chief means of breaking the powerful Liberal party into fragments. We shall deal with this engrossing and bewildering problem in the next section of this chapter.

But even if there had been no Irish problem, the changing conditions of the time would have strained and perhaps broken Gladstonian Liberalism. The age of imperialism had begun; the European peoples, as we have seen, were entering upon an era of fierce competition for extra-European dominion; and this very fact was stimulating among the British peoples an imperial temper which was out of key with the Gladstonian tradition. Foreign and, still more, colonial questions insisted upon occupying the forefront of the stage, and in spite of themselves Gladstone and his colleagues were compelled to give a great deal of their attention to these issues. They had to settle the Afghan difficulty, left unsolved by Disraeli. They felt themselves constrained to introduce a new departure in the government of India, which aroused bitter controversy. They had to deal with a rebellion in the Transvaal (1880). They were drawn reluctantly into Egypt (1882), and had to decide what was to be done with Mahdism in the Sudan. They were faced by a sudden danger from Russia (1884). They had to deal with the sudden outburst of colonising fever among the European Powers in Africa and in the Pacific. With the last of these questions we have already dealt, and the others will be discussed in later chapters. What we are here concerned to note is that the circumstances of the time made it impossible to attain the Gladstonian ideal of concentration upon domestic reforms, and abstention from foreign entanglements. And it is undeniable that the spirit in which this succession of difficult problems was handled was not in accord with the rising imperialist temper of the British people. More particularly, Gladstone's treatment of the South African problem, his apparent desertion of Gordon in the Sudan, and his complaisance towards Ger-

many and France in Africa, and towards Germany in the Pacific, aroused against him an angry hostility.

Not less disturbing was the growing strength of a demand for social reorganisation. We shall discuss in a later chapter[1] the rise of a new Socialist movement which is one of the most interesting features of this time. In the early 'eighties it had not yet begun seriously to affect national politics. But the spirit which gave rise to it obtained some expression in the advanced Radicalism of which Joseph Chamberlain was the chief exponent. Throughout the years 1880-1885 there was acute friction between the moderates and the radicals in the cabinet, which was not always concealed from public view, and which added very greatly to the difficulties of Government. It became overt when in the general election of 1885 Chamberlain boldly put forward an 'unauthorised programme,' and engaged in an unseemly platform duel with his Whig colleague, Lord Hartington. The 'unauthorised programme' was Radical indeed, and aroused fierce indignation among tepid Whigs as well as among staid Conservatives. Chamberlain was dreaded as a demagogue even more dangerous than his chief. His programme included disestablishment, free education, drastic differential taxation of the rich, and a bold agricultural policy which promised the creation on a vast scale of small holdings—'three acres and a cow'—for rural labourers; and it was accompanied by pungent and virulent denunciations of the House of Lords, and of the rich 'who toil not neither do they spin.' Gladstone, though he was not afraid of bold proposals, had little sympathy with the ideas of this school; the Socialist tendencies of the younger generation were as much out of harmony with his mode of thought as its imperialism.

These differences and difficulties made it almost impossible to carry out any large, coherent legislative programme. But there was another, and, at the moment, a more perturbing difficulty. The machinery of parliamentary government seemed to be breaking down. The Irish under Parnell's leadership were pursuing a policy of systematic obstruction. A little group of Conservatives known as the Fourth Party and led by Lord Randolph Churchill, set themselves to imitate the methods of the Irish, and introduced an acrimony into discussion such as had not been known since 1846. And, by an unlucky chance, the demand of the atheist Bradlaugh to be allowed to make an affirmation

[1] Below, Chap. vi. p. 681.

instead of taking an oath on his election for Northampton introduced a topic on which an incredible amount of time and fury was wasted. The proceedings of the House of Commons were degraded, as never before, by incessant scenes of disorder; the rules of procedure had to be drastically revised, and the old dignity and freedom of debate disappeared. One consequence of these events was that the prestige of Parliament, which had been at its height during the previous generation, began to decay. This process was assisted by the fact that the chief arena of debate on public policy was increasingly being transferred from Parliament to the platform; and Gladstone himself, by his great oratorical tours, contributed in no small degree to this result. It was assisted also by the growing rigidity of party organisation which marked this period, and which was, perhaps, the inevitable outcome of the creation of a very large electorate.

In spite of all these difficulties Government succeeded in obtaining the assent of Parliament to a number of useful measures, such as an Act against corrupt practices in parliamentary elections (1883), an Act making employers liable for accidents to their workmen (1880), and a Married Women's Property Act (1882), which remedied a great injustice. But, putting Irish legislation apart, it was only able to carry one measure of first-rate importance—the third Reform Act (1884), with its accompanying Redistribution Act (1885).

The Act of 1884 was of the first importance, because it practically established democracy. Twice as many new voters were added by this Act as had been added by the Act of 1867; in effect it conferred the franchise upon every male head of a household; and for the first time the agricultural labourer was endowed with political powers. Yet, significantly enough, there had been no loud public demand for the enlargement of the franchise. For a moment the House of Lords threatened resistance, and an agitation for the 'mending or ending' of that chamber seemed about to begin. But the Lords contented themselves with insisting that the extension of the franchise should be accompanied by an agreed measure of redistribution; and the Act of 1885 was the result. In some respects the Redistribution Act was even more important than the Franchise Act. It divided Britain for the first time into equal electoral districts, each represented by a single member. The districts, in order to be equal, had to be artificial areas, existing solely for the purpose of the election. They could not correspond with

real communities that possessed a character and tradition of their own. This was a departure which broke away from the ancient tradition which gave to the House of Commons (communes) its very name. At the same time, the system of single-member constituencies increased the power of the party machines; no candidate, in such a constituency, could have much chance of election unless he was put forward by a party organisation. It is possible that these consequences of the new system helped to produce the slowly growing sense that there was a certain unreality in the parliamentary system.

§ 2. *The Irish Problem and the First Home Rule Bill.*

But all other issues of this period shrink into insignificance in comparison with the growing menace and difficulty of the Irish problem. The new phase into which this ancient problem now passed was due to three things: to the continued existence of the party of violence; to the organisation of a formidable agrarian campaign; and to the personality and policy of Charles Stewart Parnell, who was chosen in 1880 as the leader of the Home Rule party, which was 61 strong in the new Parliament.

The party of violence, which aimed at securing the independence of Ireland by means of outrage and terrorism, drew its main strength from America. From 1880 to 1884 it was continually engaged in forming dynamite plots, which invariably came to nothing. But the constant reports of these dastardly plots had a profound effect upon British opinion; and Irish events were interpreted in the light of them. They were organised and financed mainly by the American Clan-na-Gael, which spent some £25,000 on them.

The agrarian agitation of these years was only the latest of a long series of such troubles, on which we have had to comment from time to time.[1] Like its predecessors, it was due to the acute distress from which the Irish peasantry were still suffering, and which the well-meant Land Act of 1870 had done little or nothing to remedy. Agricultural distress was serious in England as well as in Ireland in the late 'seventies; there were bad harvests, and cheap American corn was beginning to pour in. In both countries corn-land was turned to pasture, on a large scale. In Ireland there were wholesale evictions to make this process possible, and the 1870 Act did not avail to prevent them, because it only

[1] Above, pp. 89, 202, 333, 398, 509, 586.

gave security to tenants whose rents were paid, and nearly all the Irish peasantry, being heavily over-rented, were deep in arrears. In 1879 a Land League was formed, to encourage tenants to resist. Part of its policy was the use of the 'boycott,' so called from an agent named Boycott, who was the first victim of the method: the owner or agent who evicted a tenant, and the new holder who took the farm, were excluded under this system from all human fellowship. But the agitation was not limited to the comparatively pacific methods of the boycott. Outrages of various kinds, ranging from the maiming of cattle to murder, took place on the largest scale. Those who took part in these outrages, even if they were discovered, were certain to be acquitted by an Irish jury.

Quite distinct from these campaigns was the policy of securing Home Rule, or legislative independence, which Parnell and his Irish colleagues had set before themselves. Parnell was a young Protestant landlord of English descent, who had sat in Parliament since 1875. He was not a man of great intellectual power or constructive ability. But he was a man of inflexible will, an icy fanatic, not to be deflected by any power on earth from the object he had set before himself, reserved and unapproachable, but strong in his utter contempt for the opinion of the world. He made himself the absolute master of his party, and brought them to regard themselves as sitting in Parliament not in order to forward the welfare of the United Kingdom, but singly and solely in order to secure independence for Ireland by proving to the English that Ireland could not be governed in defiance of its own will. One way of proving this was to show that Irish members both could and would, if they were forced to attend at Westminster, reduce parliamentary government to derision. For this end he had mastered parliamentary procedure, and brought obstruction to a fine art. About the form of Ireland's self-government he did not greatly care, so long as Ireland was left free to manage her own affairs. Sometimes (in America) he spoke of severing every link with England; at other times he seemed to be content with the control of local affairs.

Parnell early realised that if he was to have the whole force of national feeling behind him, he must come to an agreement with the other movements. He went to America to persuade the American-Irish to finance his movement, and to drop the hopeless policy of outrage, which he despised. He was never completely successful; though he

got large funds. But his relations with the murder-organisation in America naturally exposed him to criticism. He also took up the agrarian agitation, and became President of the Land League; not so much because he cared about the land-question in itself, as because he saw how useful the agitation was in demonstrating the failure of British rule.

Such was the situation with which Government was faced in 1880; though the facts were by no means understood, and in the popular view Parnell and his colleagues were identified with the dynamiters and the moonlighters. A twofold remedy seemed to be necessary. On the one hand, in view of the impotence of the ordinary machinery of law, special powers must be taken to deal with agrarian crime; on the other hand, a serious attempt must be made to remove the causes of the evil, by a bold treatment of the land question. For the first purpose the Chief Secretary, W. E. Forster, obtained powers, for a short period, to arrest and imprison suspected persons without trial. Hundreds of suspects were arrested; but without effect. For the second purpose, Gladstone introduced a drastic Land Bill (1881), which was strongly attacked, but carried. It practically turned the tenant into a joint proprietor with the landlord; it provided that his rent might be fixed, not by competition, but by a Land Court; that he should have fixity of tenure so long as this judicial rent was paid; and that he should be free to sell his interest in his holding. When the Land Courts were established, it was found that they reduced existing rents, on an average, by about 25 per cent. This was a real and solid boon to the Irish peasantry. But it did not appease them; outrage still continued.

Meanwhile Forster, in desperation, had suppressed the Land League as a criminal organisation, and imprisoned Parnell and some of his colleagues. This had no effect in reducing agrarian crime: as Parnell predicted, his place at the head of the Land League was taken by 'Captain Moonlight.' Evidently the policy of repression was a failure. Chamberlain opened communications with Parnell, who undertook to co-operate in restoring peace if the interned men were released and arrears of rent were dealt with. The undertaking was accepted; both Chamberlain and Gladstone were beginning to think of the possibility of establishing a generous system of local self-government in Ireland; and Forster was replaced as Chief Secretary by Lord Frederick Cavendish, who was to inaugurate a new régime. But the hopes of peace were blighted by the news that the new Chief

Secretary and his principal permanent official, Mr. Burke, had been murdered in broad daylight while crossing Phœnix Park (1882). The murder-gang had intervened to prevent reconciliation. Parnell, genuinely shocked, offered to resign his seat, and the offer led Gladstone to change his opinion of the Irish leader. But after this outrage a new Crimes Act seemed to be necessary; and once more passions were aroused to intensity on both sides. Yet the attempt to remove the causes of distress was not abandoned. A drastic measure for the cancellation of arrears of rent was passed; and the cabinet discussed a proposal for setting up in Ireland elected County Councils, with a National Council to which should be transferred most of the powers of the Dublin Castle bureaucracy.

From 1882 to 1885 the Crimes Act (which gave powers of summary arrest to the police, and allowed grave crimes to be tried by three judges without a jury) was firmly enforced; and crime undoubtedly diminished, partly for that reason, but partly because the Land Act and the Arrears Act were easing the situation. But the demand for Home Rule was not weakening. Parnell, who had definitely quarrelled with the American extremists, replaced the Land League in 1882 by a National League, whose sole aim was Home Rule. When the Reform Act was under discussion in 1884, there was strong opposition to its extension to Ireland; but Gladstone indignantly refused to deny equal rights of citizenship to the Irish people merely because some of them were criminals, and Ireland obtained the enlarged franchise, which everybody knew would increase the strength of the Parnellite party.

In 1885 the Liberal Government was defeated on the budget, and the Conservatives under Lord Salisbury, though in a minority, assumed office for a few months, pending a dissolution. In the coming election much would depend upon the Irish vote in England. The Conservative leaders gave out that they were prepared to govern Ireland without exceptional legislation. Their Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, with Lord Salisbury's knowledge, had a private interview with Parnell, in which he conveyed the impression that he was prepared to go far in the direction of Irish self-government. The order therefore went forth that all Irish votes were to be given to the Conservatives.

During the election, and even before it, Gladstone's mind was evidently moving towards Home Rule. He sounded some of his colleagues as to the possibility of a settlement

'on colonial lines.' But he made no definite public pronouncement on the question, beyond asking for a clear majority not dependent on Irish votes. The result of the election was to demonstrate Parnell's complete ascendancy in Catholic Ireland: 86 out of 103 Irish members returned pledged to Home Rule. It was no longer possible to deny that the Irish people (apart from Ulster) had made up its mind on this subject; 86 against 17 was a very different proportion from 61 against 42. The British elections gave the Liberals a majority of 86 over the Conservatives; and this meant that the Irish members held the balance, and that they could make parliamentary government impossible. In face of these facts, Gladstone made up his mind that Home Rule in some form must be granted. But knowing the difficulty of carrying it, he let Lord Salisbury know that he could count upon Liberal support if he would attempt the settlement of the Irish problem, which could plainly only be solved by agreement. Salisbury refused to discuss the matter. His ministry, in due course, was defeated and resigned; and Gladstone resumed office, to undertake the heaviest task of his life, at the age of seventy-seven.

From the outset it was made plain that he could not hope to carry his party with him. The Whigs, led by Hartington, deserted him. Some of the Radicals, led by Chamberlain, came into the ministry, but withdrew when they saw the nature of the measure proposed. A great party was cleft in twain; social ostracism was the lot of those who adhered to Gladstone; his policy was widely regarded as sheer treason, motived solely by greed for power. But the old man persisted, introducing, with the help of his Chief Secretary, John Morley, not only a very bold proposal for the establishment of an independent legislature in Ireland, but a vast scheme for the buying out of the Irish landlords at a cost of £50,000,000 and the creation of a peasant proprietary. It is needless to discuss the details of these measures. Their fate was sealed beforehand. After intense and passionate debates, in which the opposition was mainly conducted by Gladstone's late colleagues, the first Home Rule Bill was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 30. But the old man refused to submit to his defeat. He went to the country; and in a second election within nine months the bewildered electorate decided against him, giving to the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists a majority of 118 over the Liberals and Parnellites combined. The Liberal ascendancy was at an end. A long period of Conservative govern-

ment began, and the possibility of the conferment of self-government upon Ireland receded into the distance.

§ 3. *The Salisbury Government and the Second Home Rule Bill.*

The Liberal *débâcle* of 1886 put the Conservatives, under Lord Salisbury, into power for six years, though they depended upon the support of the Liberal Unionists. Salisbury's second ministry was a successful and competent Government. On its bold and aggressive imperial policy we have already said something, and shall have more to say in a later chapter.[1] It also passed some useful measures of social reform.[2] But its most outstanding legislative achievement may be described as a long overdue completion of the Liberal policy of political reorganisation. The Local Government Act of 1888, which was based upon a scheme drawn up by Sir Charles Dilke, Gladstone's President of the Local Government Board, was in truth the counterpart and sequel of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. It set up elected Councils in every county, to which were transferred the functions hitherto exercised by the Justices of the Peace; and, by constituting Greater London an administrative county, it gave to the metropolis, for the first time, a unified system of administration. No measure of the second half of the nineteenth century has had more beneficent effects than this great Act, which was followed by a reforming activity on the part of the new Councils comparable to that which had resulted from the municipal Act of 1835. With its sequel, the Parish Councils Act of 1894,[3] it completed the framework of English self-government, reduced to order the administrative confusion which had been created by the piecemeal legislation of the previous half-century, and provided the machinery which made possible the social and educational reforms of the next generation.

But the Irish question still dominated everything: 'politics are Ireland,' said Lord Salisbury in 1887; and throughout these years Irish questions occupied the greater part of the time of Parliament, and drastic changes in procedure had to be adopted in order to make the transaction of business possible. The Conservative recipe for Ireland was 'twenty years of resolute government'; and for six years, at any rate, the recipe had a fair trial. A new Crimes

[1] Above, pp. 626 ff.; below, p. 678.
[2] Below, p. 684. [3] Below, p. 650.

Act (1887) showed how impossible it was to govern Ireland without exceptional powers, in opposition to the sentiments of the majority of the people. It was firmly and suavely enforced by Mr. Arthur Balfour in the teeth of unresting criticism, no longer from the Parnellite group alone, but from the whole opposition; and an attempt to carry on a new rent agitation under the name of the Plan of Campaign was resolutely suppressed. But 'resolute government' was accompanied by restorative measures:—a new Land Law (1887), extending the scope of that of 1881; a land-purchase Act (1891), whereby the treasury undertook to advance to the tenant the money necessary to purchase his holding whenever the landlord was willing to sell; and a series of relief works in the congested and poverty-stricken area of the west. Home Rule was to be killed by firmness and kindness.

But Home Rule was not killed. The agitation went on, backed now by the Liberals, and it appeared from the bye-elections that Britain was being gradually converted. For Gladstone, in particular, Home Rule had become a passion, the supreme object of his life; and his spell over the electorate seemed to be reviving. Two events profoundly influenced this movement of opinion. The first was the publication in *The Times* of a series of articles purporting to prove, with the aid of letters, a connexion between Parnell and his followers and the Fenian conspirators. These allegations were the subject of a prolonged inquiry before three judges in 1888 and 1889; and when it was discovered that the damnatory letters were forgeries by a wretched and debased Irish journalist, the revulsion of feeling in Parnell's favour was very great, even though the judges reported that the Irish party had been engaged in a conspiracy to bring about separation from Britain. But the effect of this inquiry was undone, and far more than undone, when in 1890 Parnell failed to offer any defence when charged as a co-respondent in a divorce case. The 'Nonconformist Conscience' was aroused. Parnell, invited to retire from the leadership of his party, flatly refused to do so; after heart-rending discussions he was deserted by the majority of his followers, but continued to fight fiercely and bitterly for his own hand in Ireland until his death in 1891, at the age of forty-six; and the revulsion of feeling in Britain was immense.

Only a year after Parnell's death, Parliament was dissolved. Gladstone, now eighty-two years old, had hoped

for a majority sufficiently large to enable him to crown his life-work by passing a measure which would, as he believed, reconcile Britain and Ireland. The divorce case had shattered that hope, if it had ever been justified. He obtained a majority, indeed; but it depended on the Irish vote, and even with Irish aid amounted only to 40. Yet he assumed office, and at the age of eighty-three introduced the second Home Rule Bill with his old fire and intensity, and fought it through the long debates in Committee with almost his old tenacity and skill. But this was futile heroism, for the fate of the bill was sealed beforehand; it passed the House of Commons, but was contemptuously rejected by the House of Lords. Gladstone would have been ready to go once more to the country; but his colleagues knew that this was hopeless; and in 1894 the old man, accepting his defeat, gave up his office and quietly left the scenes in which he had been such a brilliant and dominating figure for sixty-three years.

The 'transient and embarrassed' Liberal ministry lasted until 1895, under the premiership of Lord Rosebery. It carried out a bold scheme of taxation in the Harcourt budget of 1894; it passed an Act establishing District and Parish Councils; it introduced bills for the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, for local option in the licensing of public-houses, and for enlarging the liability of employers for accidents to workmen. But most of these labours were a futile ploughing of the sands. There was no strength left in the Liberal party; and when the Government fell in 1895, its own members were relieved.

§ 4. *'Killing Home Rule by Kindness': Devolution and Sinn Fein.*

For another decade Liberals remained in the wilderness; and the prospect of the enactment of Home Rule seemed more remote than ever. Once more the medicine of firmness and kindness was applied; but now kindness increasingly predominated over firmness. In 1896 an ambitious land-purchase Act, which Gladstone might have fathered, was passed; in 1903 it was supplemented by a still more sweeping measure, whereby £100,000,000 were advanced by the British treasury to buy out progressively all the Irish landlords. In 1898 Ireland was endowed with a full system of representative county government. The Irish Agricultural Society, under the guidance of Sir Horace

Plunkett, set itself to stimulate co-operative enterprise. Land-purchase and co-operation between them brought a rapid increase of prosperity in Ireland; when the twentieth century opened, the old miseries had almost disappeared.

But the desire for self-government had not disappeared. The Irish Nationalist party, once more united and now working in intimate harmony with the British Liberals, still kept its hold over the Irish electorate. What was more striking, a large section of the southern Irish landowners, hitherto staunch Unionists, began to hanker after self-government, and to co-operate with some of the Nationalist leaders. In 1904 they went so far as to demand a scheme of devolution, whereby an Irish Financial Council was to have the expenditure of large funds for purely Irish purposes. This produced a violent reaction among the more extreme Unionists, who forced the Government to disavow these projects, and to throw overboard the Chief Secretary, George Wyndham, who had encouraged them.

It seemed as if a spirit of reconciliation was growing up. But the reverse was true. The demand for complete legislative independence was so far from being dead or even weakened that it began to take a new form. A trial had been given to the constitutional method of proceeding by parliamentary action. It had promised well at first. It had converted one of the great British political parties. But nearly twenty years had passed since the first Home Rule Bill was introduced, and Home Rule seemed more distant than ever. A group of Irish enthusiasts decided that the only true course for Ireland to pursue was to hold aloof altogether from British politics, to cultivate self-reliance, to revive the language and traditions of Ireland, to develop its industries, to stimulate among its young men a hatred of Britain, and to await the moment when Britain should be otherwise engaged, and when it should be possible to strike for complete independence. *Sinn Fein* was born just at the moment when the policy of killing by kindness seemed to be succeeding. It was born of the long failure to obtain the concession of Home Rule by constitutional means.

[Gretton, *Modern England*; Low and Sanders, *History of England since 1837*; Paul, *History of Modern England* (to 1895); Morley, *Life of Gladstone*; Cecil, *Life of Salisbury*; O'Brien, *Life of Parnell* and *A Hundred Years of Irish History*; Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland*; Barker, *Ireland in the Last Fifty Years*; Macdonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*; Henry, *Evolution of Sinn Fein*.]

CHAPTER IV

EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIAN SUDAN

(A.D. 1882-1904)

§ 1. *The Causes of British Intervention in Egypt.*

In all the long story of the British Commonwealth there is no episode more extraordinary, more romantic, or, on the whole, more creditable, than the rapid and brilliant work of regeneration which was carried out in Egypt and the Sudan by a small group of British administrators during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. Begun in an accidental and haphazard way, with no anticipation of what was to follow, it was carried out in the teeth of varied difficulties; yet in the course of two short decades, under the direction of a man of genius, it achieved results that appear all but incredible.

We have seen [1] how Mehemet Ali had tried, by the methods of oriental despotism, to force upon Egypt the material organisation of Western civilisation, and how, until the European Powers intervened in 1840, he had striven to extend his military power on every side. Among his conquests one alone survived: a great part of the Sudan remained a subject possession of Egypt, and was ruled from Khartoum.[2] But it was a costly possession, involving a continual drain upon the Egyptian treasury. Indeed, all Mehemet Ali's achievements were costly to his subjects. The mass of the Egyptian *fellahin*, performing forced labour under the lash, forced into the army by the same persuasive methods, and taxed until they were left with nothing but the barest subsistence, suffered the extremes of wretchedness. Only the dominant classes of Turkish and Arab foreigners, who were the instruments of Mehemet's tyranny, shared in his wealth.

After an interval during which much of Mehemet Ali's work was undone, his Westernising policy was resumed by Said Pasha (1854-63), who began the construction of rail-

[1] Above, Bk. IX. chap. VI. p. 369.
[2] See the map, Atlas, *Introd.*, p. 61.

ways and authorised the Suez Canal, and still more by Ismail Pasha (1863-79), a reckless spendthrift of vague and grandiose ambitions. One of these ambitions was the extension of Egyptian power in the Sudan, which was subjugated as far to the south as the great lakes and the borders of Abyssinia. For the conquest and administration of these Equatorial Provinces Ismail trusted to two adventurous Englishmen, first to Sir Samuel Baker (1869-1873), the explorer of the sources of the Nile ; and then (1874-1879) to a still more brilliant and romantic figure, Charles Gordon,[1] a Scottish soldier who was known as 'Chinese Gordon' because of his dazzling exploits as commander of a Chinese army against the Tai-ping rebels in 1863-1864. Gordon was one of the noblest and most heroic men whom Britain has ever given to the world : 'the hero of heroes' as Gladstone called him. A mystic and a saint, pure-hearted and single-minded, he was also a born leader of men, and especially of simple and primitive men, whom he could inspire with a devoted trust in himself. But he was a creature of impulse, who trusted absolutely to his own varying intuitions, without being able to justify them ; for this reason he could not easily work in harness, and was always a difficult colleague. In five years Gordon established an extraordinary personal ascendancy among the wild tribes of the Sudan ; and he waged relentless war against the cruel slave-trade by which these lands were desolated. When he left the Sudan in 1879, he had planted it on the path to peace and order, and garrisons of Egyptian troops, widely distributed, held the vast province in some sort of obedience. But there was a good deal of unrest among the fierce chieftains whom he had bitted and bridled, and this unrest grew rapidly under Gordon's incapable Egyptian successor. The continuance of progress in the Sudan depended upon Egypt ; and meanwhile Egypt was falling into chaos.

The Khedive Ismail had discovered that he could borrow money from European financiers. He borrowed cheerfully and recklessly, raising the public debt of Egypt in thirteen years from £3,000,000 to nearly £100,000,000 ; while the unhappy *fellahin* were subjected to an indescribable tyranny, fleeced of all their earnings under the lash, and continually subject to forced labour. Some of the money raised by loans was spent on railways and roads, and on a Nile dam, which was not put to use ; but most of it was merely wasted,

[1] There is a short life of Gordon by Sir W. Butler in the 'English Men of Action' Series.

swallowed up by the hordes of European, Turkish and Arab adventurers who haunted Ismail's spendthrift court. The European bondholders took alarm, and in 1876 Ismail was forced to agree to the establishment of an international *Caisse de la Dette*, to which, as security for the bondholders' interest, some of the principal sources of Egyptian revenue were to be paid direct, instead of going into the treasury. For nearly thirty years this international body had its finger in Egyptian finance, and offered the greatest obstacle to systematic reforms. But this was not the end of European interference. The French and British bondholders, who held most of the debt, realised that it was not enough merely to sequester half of the revenues. If Egypt was to be saved from bankruptcy, her finances must be regulated ; and they therefore secured the appointment of two Controllers-general of Egyptian finance, one French and one British. Ismail resented his reduction to impotence, intrigued against the Controllers, and even suborned a military mutiny against his own ministers. The European Powers, on the initiative of Germany, thereupon began to interfere again ; and in 1879 they got the Sultan, as suzerain of Egypt, to depose Ismail and to replace him by his young son Tewfik. Up to this point the British Government had played little part, though the British bondholders had been active.

Meanwhile a secret conspiracy was astir among the Egyptians. Its nominal leader was Ahmad Arabi, an officer in the Egyptian army, of *fellah* origin, and the movement of which he was the spokesman was primarily a protest against the monstrous misgovernment from which Egypt was suffering. But it was also a nationalist movement, aimed against the ascendancy of the Turkish ruling class, and, in a secondary degree, against European influence. As it went on, the anti-European element became stronger ; it was encouraged by the influence of the fanatical Mohammedan revival which Abdul Hamid was fostering, and whose prophet, Djemal-ed-Din, was busy in Cairo. The centre of this dangerous movement of disaffection was the disorganised and unruly Egyptian army. Ismail had encouraged the movement for his own purposes. Under his son Tewfik it became overt. The Khedive was compelled to accept a ministry drawn from among the revolutionaries, with Arabi as War Minister (1882). But the revolutionaries had no capacity for government. They could only create anarchy. They were playing with the dangerous explosives of racial and religious hatred. And the position of the many thou-

sands of Europeans in Egypt became exceedingly unsafe. Some action was necessary. Gambetta, then Prime Minister of France, suggested to Britain that the two Powers should intervene jointly. Gladstone's Government reluctantly agreed. French and British ships appeared off Alexandria, as a precaution. There was a massacre of Europeans by the Egyptian mob. The British fleet thereupon bombarded the forts, and marines were landed to protect the European population. The French fleet took no action, its Government, after the fall of Gambetta, having changed its mind; and henceforth France stood aloof.

Intervention could not stop with a naval demonstration. After a conference of ambassadors at Constantinople, and a refusal by the Sultan to send troops to Egypt, Britain announced that she would intervene single-handed, but would withdraw as soon as she had restored order and re-established the Khedive's authority. An army was promptly sent to Egypt under Sir Garnet Wolseley. Arabi's disorderly troops were overwhelmed at Tel-el-Kebir (September 1882); a tiny squadron of cavalry daringly pushed on to Cairo and received the submission of the capital; Arabi and his allies were taken prisoners, and subsequently banished to Ceylon; and the revolt was over. The revolt was over; but the restoration of order and stability had still to be undertaken.

Meanwhile grave events had been happening in the Sudan since Gordon's departure. A fanatic had arisen in the southern part of the provinces, proclaiming himself the Mahdi or Messiah (1881). He was gathering adherents, and his Khalifas, or generals, were subjugating tribe after tribe with ruthless cruelty. By the time the British authority was established in Egypt, he had made great progress. The security of the Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan was threatened. Egypt itself, whose army was now broken and disbanded, might be endangered. The problem which faced the British Government was therefore not merely the problem of restoring order in Egypt, but also the more difficult question, What was to be done with the Sudan? Britain had undertaken a vastly more difficult task than she had anticipated.

§ 2. *The Tragedy of Khartoum and Baring's Work at Cairo.*

The position now occupied by Britain in Egypt was both irregular and delicate. Her army occupied the country, and was its only defence. But her representatives had no

formal authority. Britain was not the suzerain power: that position belonged to Turkey, which often made difficulties. The Khedive and his ministers were nominally responsible for the conduct of government; all that the British agent could do was to offer advice, though it is true that the presence of the army gave his advice a certain quality of emphasis. And alongside the Khedive's Government was the *Caisse de la Dette*, which controlled half the revenues of the country, regarded with the utmost jealousy every exercise of British influence, and often created needless difficulties. Finally, France, bitterly disappointed at the loss of her hitherto dominating influence in Egypt, was always watchfully critical; and a good many Frenchmen were employed in various Egyptian government services. It is impossible to conceive a more anomalous or a more thorny position than that which the British agent had to occupy; and to carry out, from such a position, the reorganisation of a bankrupt and totally disorganised State was a task which seemed beyond human powers. But a man was found to perform this incredible task. His name was Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer; and he was the chief hero of the wonderful achievement which we have to ecord in this chapter.

The first problem which had to be solved was the problem of the Sudan. In 1883 an Egyptian force of 10,000 under a British officer, Hicks Pasha, was sent by the Khedive's Government to crush the Mahdi's revolt: this army was annihilated; and a smaller force which sallied out from Suakin under Valentine Baker Pasha was equally unfortunate. These disasters increased the dependence of Egypt upon British protection; and they also showed that the Sudan could not be reconquered by Egyptian resources. If a British army were employed, the task might occupy years; and it would delay the evacuation of Egypt, to which the British Government was pledged, and which it was honestly anxious to carry out at the earliest moment. The only possible conclusion seemed to be that the Sudan must be abandoned, and in this conclusion, after Hicks' defeat, Baring fully concurred. But the Egyptian garrisons could not be left to the mercy of the Mahdi. They must be withdrawn. Who could perform this task? Who, if not Gordon? In January 1884 the Government in London asked Gordon if he would undertake the definite mission of evacuation. He undertook it; left London the same night; and arrived in Khartoum a month later.

But once in Khartoum, the problem presented itself to the generous and impulsive soldier in a new light. He shrank from complete abandonment; yet he issued a proclamation announcing that it was to take place, and by doing so aggravated his own difficulties. He bombarded Baring with contradictory telegrams. He demanded that Zobeir, a Sudanese chieftain and slave-trader then confined in Cairo, whose son Gordon himself had killed, should be sent to succeed him. London was perplexed. There were delays and discussions, but Gordon took no definite steps towards evacuation; and meanwhile the Mahdi's forces were gathering. By April escape from Khartoum had become impossible, and now the problem was, how Gordon could be relieved. The experts in London and Cairo differed as to whether an attempt should be made across the desert from Suakin, or up the Nile.[1] Precious months were wasted. When the Nile route was decided upon, boats had to be built; and it was not until November that a force under Wolseley began to advance to the relief of the beleaguered hero. A small advance-guard, pushing eagerly ahead, came in sight of Khartoum on January 28, 1885. They saw only ruins: Gordon had been killed only two days before, after a desperate lonely fight against swarming savages. The death of the hero deeply moved the British people, to whom Khartoum became a holy place. After these events the Sudan was necessarily left to the murderous and devastating rule of the Mahdi, and after his death in 1885 to his successor the Khalifa, whose tyranny is said to have reduced the population, in a dozen years, from 12,000,000 to 2,000,000.

Meanwhile Baring and his colleagues were labouring at the difficult uphill task of restoring Egypt. During the first years they had to strain every nerve merely to avoid bankruptcy and to reconstruct the army. Rigid economy in everything but irrigation achieved the first end; a handful of young British officers carried out the task of recreating an Egyptian army and restoring its self-respect; and a few British engineers, by means of admirable irrigation works, laid the foundations of future prosperity. By 1888 the budget had been made to balance, and it was possible to undertake great works of restoration on a large scale. Railways were constructed; schools were opened; scientific sanitation was introduced; hospitals were built; the whole system of justice was overhauled and freed from corruption;

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition, *Introd.*, p. 61, 6th Edition Plate 88 (*b*).

the abuse of power by local officials was checked; the *fellahin* were freed from the terrors of the lash; the taxes were greatly reduced, and collected fairly. For the first time in many centuries the *fellah* found himself treated as a free man with rights; and meanwhile the productivity of his holding was doubled by irrigation, and lands previously waste were brought under cultivation. Within a dozen years Egypt had been turned into a land of flourishing prosperity, and her industrious peasantry had been enabled to enjoy the fruits of their own toil. And during the same period the Egyptian army had been recreated, and had repeatedly shown its quality in frontier fighting against the dervishes of the Sudan. It is not easy to find in all history the record of a work so beneficent and so swift. It was done by a little group of men who held no position of definite authority, but nominally acted merely as advisers to the various Egyptian ministries, while they were hampered at every turn by vexatious restrictions imposed by the international body which controlled the *Caisse de la Dette*.

§ 3. *The Reconquest of the Sudan, and the Entente of* 1904.

By 1896 the time had come when it was possible to think of rescuing the Sudan from the hideous barbarism into which it had been plunged. Europeans who had suffered imprisonment in the hands of the Khalifa had brought back terrible stories of their own sufferings and of the misery of the countryside. Not only for the sake of the Sudan itself, but as a condition of security for Egypt, reconquest seemed to be necessary. The Egyptian army was ready for the task, and it was now under the command of a Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener, who had spent laborious years in shaping the instrument he was to use, and who was soon to prove himself a master of patient organisation.

In three campaigns, 1896, 1897, and 1898, Kitchener secured the line of the Nile from Wady Halfa to Khartoum, building a railway line as he advanced to supply his troops, and boldly carrying it across the desert to avoid a great loop of the river. In every fight which the Khalifa dared to offer, the Egyptian forces, backed by a small contingent of British troops, fought with steady gallantry. Finally, on September 2, 1898, at Omdurman, opposite Khartoum, Kitchener fought a decisive battle against the Khalifa's host, routed him with heavy losses, captured his capital, and ended the ugly tyranny which had desolated the Sudan

for seventeen years. The total cost of this supremely efficient campaign was under £2,500,000; and more than half of this represented the cost of constructing a railway line which is a permanent addition to the country's resources. £800,000 of the total was met by the British treasury; the rest was defrayed out of the surplus which Baring had built up in Egypt, without the addition of one penny to the burden of taxation.

A new difficulty now presented itself. Kitchener learnt at Khartoum of the arrival of a French force at Fashoda, far away in the Equatorial Provinces, where Baker and Gordon had long before ruled. One of the main justifications for the conquest of the Sudan was the importance, for the welfare of Egypt, of controlling the upper waters of the Nile, upon which the very existence of Egypt depends. On that ground the occupation of any part of this region by another Power was held to be undesirable; and for that reason the French had to be persuaded to withdraw.[1]

The great task still remained of reorganising the whole vast area of the Sudan. Before the outbreak of Mahdism, the Sudan had been a part of the realm of Egypt. But it had been reconquered by a joint effort of Egypt and Britain; and this was recognised by the proclamation of a joint sovereignty, which had one great advantage, that it saved the new province from being subjected to the vexatious international control which had worked so much harm in Egypt. In reality the main responsibility for organisation and government fell upon a few British officers, with Kitchener, and later Sir F. R. Wingate, at their head. In a very few years they effected a regeneration as remarkable as that which Baring had achieved in Egypt. They made no attempt to Anglicise or Egyptianise the population. But they rooted out the slave-trade; they put an end to tribal wars; they fostered agriculture and trade; they gave complete toleration to all beliefs; they introduced schools; they set up courts of justice. All this was carried out with taxes at a very low level; yet without any increase in taxation, the revenue increased almost tenfold in ten years. Ten years after this beneficent work began it was possible for a visiting officer to report, after a tour of inspection, 'I do not suppose that there is any part of the world in which the mass of the population have fewer unsatisfied wants.' If there be any who doubt whether European government brings benefits to backward peoples, the

[1] See above, Chap. ii. p. 627.

record of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan supplies a sufficient answer.

Meanwhile in Egypt the work of Baring, now Lord Cromer, had been consolidated and extended, and when the new century opened the prosperity as well as the safety of Egypt seemed to be secure. It might now be contended, not without apparent reason, that Britain's task in Egypt was done, and that she might safely withdraw. This was persistently maintained by France; it was felt by the young Khedive Abbas Hilmi, who succeeded to the throne in 1892, and promptly began to work against British influence; it was urged by educated Egyptians, convinced that they were now ready for self-government, and a nationalist and anti-British movement was already rising in the 'nineties. But the work which had been so swiftly done might be as swiftly undone; and would infallibly be undone unless a scheme of government could be devised which would provide adequate safeguards. It was already evident, when the new century opened, that vexed and difficult questions would soon be raised.

One thing, however, had become plain. So long as the existing régime lasted, there could be no further need for the financial supervision exercised by the *Caisse de la Dette* in the interests of foreign bondholders; for the credit of Egypt was now as good as that of most European countries. But such a system, once established, is difficult to uproot. It was maintained especially by the unappeased annoyance of France, who could not forget that she might have been the dominant Power in Egypt, and who was persuaded that she had been tricked by British hypocrisy.

Throughout the period of regenerative work which had transformed the condition of Egypt, France and Britain had been separated by a multitude of petty causes of friction. In 1904, drawn together by causes which will be analysed in a later chapter,[1] they settled all their outstanding difficulties; and one of the main subjects of their agreement was Egypt. France recognised the special position of Britain in Egypt, while Britain declared that she had no intention of altering the political status of the country, that is to say, of bringing it under her direct control. At the same time France agreed to the issue of a Khedivial decree whereby the powers of the *Caisse de la Dette* to interfere in the machinery of government were abolished, and Egypt resumed full command of her own resources. The

[1] Below, Chap ix. p. 720

Caisse remained, but only to receive and distribute the funds necessary to pay the interest on the debt. The agreement was communicated to the other Powers represented on the *Caisse*, Germany, Austria and Italy, and obtained their assent. The period of chaos, of foreign interference, of international wrangling and of internal misgovernment was thus brought to an end. This was only twenty-one years from the time when Evelyn Baring arrived as a British agent accredited to the Government of a bankrupt country on the verge of anarchy.

[Cromer, *Modern Egypt*; Milner, *England in Egypt*; Colvin, *Making of Modern Egypt*; Wingate, *Mahdism and the Eastern Sudan*; Churchill, *River War*; Arthur, *Life of Kitchener*; Gleichen, *Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*.]

CHAPTER V

FRONTIER PROBLEMS AND NATIONALIST ASPIRATIONS IN INDIA

(A.D. 1880-1904)

§ 1. *The North-West Frontier and the Annexation of Burma.*

SAFE behind her all but impregnable barriers of mountain and sea, solidly organised in a political unity which she had never known before, and efficiently administered under a system which had been gradually perfected during a century of experiment, it might have been expected that India would have enjoyed an era of untroubled peace, unaffected by the rivalries of the European Powers, or the political controversies of the West. But in two ways the last two decades of the nineteenth century brought troubles to India. On the one hand, the fear of Russia continued to be acute, and caused the problems of defence on the North-West Frontier to occupy the minds of her statesmen; while in the North-East the advance of the French in Indo-China helped to force on a new war, which ended in the conquest and annexation of the great province of Burma. On the other hand, the political ideas of the West, diffused by schools and colleges of Western learning, began to work actively among the educated classes, and gave rise to an era of political unrest which was to become yet more acute in the next period.

The fear of Russian advance against the North-West Frontier had led to the second Afghan War (1878), in which Lord Lytton had striven either to bring Afghanistan as a whole under British influence, or to break it into three States.[1] In 1880 Lord Ripon was sent by the Gladstone ministry to reverse this policy. As soon as the war had been brought to an end, an agreement was made with the Amir whereby Afghanistan was to be left entirely to itself, without even a British Resident; but the Government of India undertook to pay a regular allowance to the Amir,

[1] See above, Bk. x. chap. vi. p. 560-2.

and guaranteed his frontiers against an attack from without. It soon became apparent that this guarantee was not to be a mere form of words. In 1884 Russia, pursuing her conquests, occupied the city of Merv, on the north-west frontier of Afghanistan; and in the next year a Russian force suddenly attacked the Afghan frontier post of Panjdeh. War was narrowly avoided; and in the next few years this part of the Afghan frontier was defined by agreement. But the episode kept alive the fear of Russia, both in India and in Afghanistan; and even when the undefined part of the frontier among the high mountains of the Pamirs had been delimited by a joint commission (1895), the fear did not disappear. For Russia was busily engaged in pushing forward railway lines through Central Asia towards the Afghan frontier; and the problem of frontier defence continued to be one of the dominant problems of Indian politics.[1]

Between Afghanistan and the territory under effective British control lay a belt of hill-country, inhabited by warlike frontier tribes, the Afridis, the Waziris and others, whom nobody had ever been able to control: this belt, indeed, through which runs the all-important route of the Khyber Pass, was and still is the most turbulent and disorderly region in the world. In 1893 the Amir agreed to recognise British suzerainty over these tribes, and a commission headed by Sir Mortimer Durand drew an agreed frontier-line (often referred to as 'the Durand line') between Afghanistan and the Indian Empire, which included this belt. But attempts to keep the tribes in check only brought on a series of frontier campaigns, in the most important of which, that of Tirah (1897) not less than 40,000 troops had to be employed; and at the end the subjugation of the tribes seemed as far off as ever.

It was left to Lord Curzon (1899-1905) to find a solution of this problem. He dealt with it by creating a special North-West Frontier Province, whose administrators would devote themselves specially to this problem. British troops were withdrawn from all the more advanced positions, where their presence irritated the tribesmen; and the maintenance of order, especially in the Khyber Pass, was entrusted to a force raised among the tribesmen themselves, and known as the Khyber Rifles. On the whole this system has been successful; but the fierce warrior clans of the frontier are always a danger, especially when they are under the influence of religious fanaticism. Hence the revival of

[1] See the maps, Atlas, 5th Edition Plates 62 and 63, 6th Edition Plates 80, 82 and 83.

Mohammedan ardour, which was growing in force during these years, threatened, if it should gain a strong hold either in Afghanistan or among the frontier tribes, to give serious trouble to India.

Alongside the revision of frontier policy went a revision of the Indian military system. Until 1895 there had been a separate army for each of the three old Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. This arrangement no longer corresponded with real needs. In 1895 the whole of the military forces were brought under a single command, while their numbers were considerably enlarged. The chief native princes, who had shown eager loyalty during the Panjdeh crisis, were encouraged to form bodies of Imperial Service troops. And in 1903 and the following years Lord Kitchener, as Commander-in-Chief, carried out a far-reaching reorganisation of the whole system, whereby everything was made to pivot upon the defence of the North-West Frontier.

It was the fear of Russia which had primarily caused these large rearrangements. The same fear led to a remarkable expedition to Tibet in 1904 : a Russian envoy had been received in that mysterious country, and, fearing lest Russia was preparing to outflank India on the north, Lord Curzon sent a force over passes 19,000 feet high to negotiate a treaty with the Grand Lama of Tibet. There was some fighting before the treaty was signed. But it had no influence upon the course of events.

Meanwhile fear of another European Power than Russia had led to a very important acquisition of territory in the East. The Burmese Empire had twice challenged war with the East India Company (1823, 1852),[1] and on each occasion it had lost territory. It was now a purely inland State, limited to the upper valley of the Irrawaddy ; and beyond its vague and ill-defined boundaries lay China in the North, the recent French conquests of Indo-China farther South, and, finally, the kingdom of Siam, on which France was beginning to exercise pressure. In 1878 a new king, Thibaw, had ascended the Burmese throne : a bloodthirsty tyrant, who signalised his accession by a massacre of other members of the royal house. From the beginning of his reign British relations with Burma were strained, treaties allowing free access to British or Indian traders were disregarded, and the British agent had to be withdrawn. Early in 1885 Thibaw concluded an ominous treaty with

[1] See above, pp. 348 and 455.

France, whereby that country obtained substantial privileges, and became the dominant influence in the country. A little later Thibaw imposed a monstrous fine upon the Bombay and Burma Trading Company, and threw its agents into prison. Lord Dufferin, then Viceroy, promptly despatched an ultimatum : and when the Burmese King refused to give satisfaction, a British force was sent by river to Mandalay. In a fortnight the Burmese resistance was overpowered ; Thibaw was deposed and deported to India ; and Burma was annexed to the Indian Empire. The main reason for this drastic action was unquestionably a fear that France was about to take possession of Burma.

Five years of difficult irregular jungle fighting against bands of plunderers had to be faced before Burma was reduced to order ; for the country had long suffered from the ravages of these *dacoits*, and the disbanded soldiery added to their strength. But while this struggle went on, the process of organisation was carried forward ; and in a very short space of time this rich and fertile land was enjoying a prosperity such as it had never known before. Between 1890 and 1900 the population increased by nearly 20 per cent., and the amount of land under cultivation by more than 50 per cent.

§ 2. *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon.*

Important as were the military problems which India presented during this period, they were of very minor significance in face of the vital fact that the new wine of Western ideas was at length fermenting to some purpose in the ancient wineskins of Indian civilisation ; and two generations of English education were beginning to bear their fruit. Indian nationalism came to birth.

It was in the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon (1880-84) that this pregnant change began. Ripon was not a man of commanding ability ; but he had been sent out by Gladstone to inaugurate a new Liberal policy, not only on the North-West Frontier, but in the internal government of India. And as the new policy came at a moment when India was ripe for change, it brought about immense results. For that reason Ripon's viceroyalty ranks among the most important in the long series. He left India in 1884 amid an outburst of popular enthusiasm such as none of his predecessors or successors has ever enjoyed, and in the regard of Indians he ranks first among all the Viceroys.

Four acts of Ripon's contributed to produce this remarkable effect. In the first place, he repealed Lytton's Vernacular Press Act,[1] and gave full license to the Indian newspaper press, which, as we shall see, made ample use of its opportunities. In the second place, he took the first step towards the establishment of a system of self-government, by setting up, in 1882, elected municipalities in the towns and District Boards in the rural districts, for the declared purpose of providing the Indian peoples with a training in self-government in preparation for the future. These local bodies were endowed with substantial powers of administration and taxation, though they were left under the supervision of the District Officers. They have not worked well. But they were hailed as a substantial step towards the establishment of autonomy, which Western-educated Indians were beginning to demand.

Ripon's third innovation was even more important in its consequences. He appointed a Commission to inquire into the educational system, and on its report introduced great changes in the educational policy of the Government of India. Hitherto the schools and colleges of Western learning had been almost all under the control either of Government or of the missionaries. After the Education Commission of 1883-4 Government began to withdraw from the provision of educational facilities, and to encourage District Boards or private organisations to take up the work, with the support of Government grants. The immediate result was an extraordinarily rapid increase in the number of schools and colleges under purely Indian management, and a correspondingly rapid increase in the number of students. Hitherto the Indians who received a Western education had been a small proportion even of the traditionally literate castes, and they had obtained their training mainly from Englishmen, in small classes. Within twenty years of the introduction of the new policy it had come about that a training in English high schools, and in colleges preparing for university degrees, had become the normal training for nearly all members of the traditionally literate castes; and most of these thousands of new pupils were receiving their training entirely from Indian teachers. When the twentieth century opened the educated classes of every part of India were linked together by the possession of a common language—English—and a common body of ideas and aspirations conveyed through that language.

[1] See above, p. 562.

This was a remarkable and in many ways an inspiring development. But it had its dangers. The new schools and colleges were for the most part unendowed and very poorly equipped; they could not afford to pay for competent teachers, except when (as sometimes happened) the teachers were inspired by pure zeal for their work; nor could they provide adequate facilities in the way of libraries or laboratories for an efficient and critical training. For the most part they confined themselves to coaching their pupils for the examinations conducted by the Universities, which were purely examining boards. And the thousands of graduates whom they turned out found it increasingly difficult to obtain appointments suitable to the training they had undergone, especially as this training was for the most part purely literary in character, and did not help those who received it to offer the multiform practical services of which their country stood in need. An immense new class was thus being created, which was full of ideas drawn from Western sources, and many members of which had good grounds for discontent. In yet another way the results of the new departure were disappointing. Ripon and his advisers had hoped that the new District Boards would use the powers vested in them to develop a system of elementary education for the masses of the people. They did not do so; for though they showed zeal for education, it was mainly for the kind of education wanted by the literate castes, to which the members of the District Boards themselves mostly belonged. The amazing expansion of the number of Western-educated Indians, mainly Hindus of the old dominant castes, which took place during the twenty years following Ripon's viceroyalty, was one of the most significant things which had happened in the modern history of India; for the existence of this large, influential and vocal class constituted a factor in Indian politics which henceforth could not be disregarded.

The fourth important measure of Ripon's Government to which we need here refer was an attempt to make a change in the administration of justice which aroused a storm of controversy and led to a very grave embitterment of racial feeling. Europeans in India had possessed the right of being tried only by British magistrates. In 1883 a bill (known as the Ilbert Bill) was introduced in the Legislative Council which proposed to put an end to this privilege, and to place Indian magistrates in all respects on a level with their British colleagues. The outcry among European

traders and planters was so loud that these provisions had to be withdrawn. But the withdrawal aroused the most intense and bitter feeling among Indians; it seemed to them to be a proclamation of their own inferiority in their own country. And the effects of this controversy lasted long after the actual storm had died down.

§ 3. *The Birth of Indian Nationalism.*

All these events combined to stir into activity the national self-consciousness of the Indian educated classes; for now that India had been politically unified under British rule, and now that they themselves possessed a common medium of communication and a common body of ideas derived from the schools of Western learning, it was possible for educated Indians to feel a sense of unity which had never before been possible in divided India; possible, also, for them to aspire after the institutions of political liberty, in which Britain had taught them to believe. In 1885 these sentiments led to the summons of the first meeting of what came to be known as the Indian National Congress; and year after year thereafter Congresses met in one or another of the chief Indian cities, to make speeches and pass resolutions claiming political privileges like those enjoyed by the self-governing colonies. Throughout this period the Congress proclaimed its gratitude and loyalty to the British power, while demanding the liberties which Britain had fostered in other countries: 'new light has been poured on us' said Dadabhai Naoroji, the President of the second Congress, 'teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not peoples for their kings; and this lesson we have learned amid the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilisation.' The Congress was not, and could not be, an elected representative body; it consisted mainly of delegates sent by various societies, and all comers were welcomed. Moreover it was a purely Hindu body: the Mohammedans stood aloof from it. But its proceedings marked a very important stage in the political development of India.

Alongside of the National Congresses, which concerned themselves solely with politics, there was a series of National Social Conferences, whose aim was to weaken or destroy the social evils which arose from the rigidity of the Hindu caste system. In face of the profound inequalities prescribed by caste—in face of the existence of 50,000,000 Indians who

were branded as 'untouchable'—there were many reformers who felt that the propagation of democratic ideas was difficult: 'you cannot be fit to exercise political rights,' said one of the greatest among them, Mr. Justice Ranade, 'unless your social system is based on reason and justice.' But the social conferences led to no definite result, and had little influence; because it was felt that the raising of these questions might weaken the political agitation by causing divisions. The 'untouchables' still remain untouchable.

The Congress movement was inspired by Western ideas, and aimed at introducing a Western political system into India. But on its nationalist side it drew strength also from various Hindu religious movements which, far from preaching Western ideas, insisted that India was inherently superior to the West. Thus a great Bengali prophet, Swami Vivekananda, who died in 1902, taught that 'the world must be conquered by India,' by her spiritual force; and the belief in Indian spiritual superiority became almost an axiom among Indian patriots. Thus, again, a prophet of Gujerat, Dayanand Saraswati, founded a powerful sect, known as the Arya Samaj, to preach the necessity of a return to the primitive wisdom of ancient India. The Arya Samaj, which had nearly 100,000 adherents in 1900, taught that primitive India had known all and more than all that the West now knew; and it became, especially in the North-West, a powerful preacher of national pride and sometimes of racial antipathy.

Thus the Westernising political and social movement was accompanied by a strong current of anti-Western feeling; and though they were inherently incompatible, these two streams of thought combined to produce, among a part of the educated class, a formidable ferment of nationalist sentiment. It was the anti-Western note which predominated in popular propaganda. A large section of the Indian press devoted itself to plangent assertions that British rule had done nothing but harm to India; that it was responsible for the poverty of the peasantry, for the recurrent famines, for the dread visitation of plague; that it was draining India of all her wealth, which was being exhausted on the salaries of British officials (only 5000 in number), and on the interest on British capital invested in India (which had equipped the country with its railway system, and many other sources of wealth). These doctrines were nowhere more vigorously preached than in the Mahratta country, where an able Brahmin, B. G. Tilak, taught the readers of

his newspaper to turn back to the glorious deeds of the warlike Sivaji, the founder of the Mahratta Empire. Sivaji had murdered a Moslem general, a foreign ruler, at a conference: his deed was glorified, and the moral was drawn from it.

Under the influence of such teaching, unrest was becoming more and more serious in some parts of India during the 'nineties: and in 1896 a shortage of rain and an outburst of bubonic plague in Bombay came to intensify the unrest. In that year two young Brahmins at Poona murdered two British officials who were engaged in trying to quell the plague. A beginning had thus been made of resort to the argument of assassination.

§ 4. *The Eve of Great Changes.*

As yet it was but a negligible minority of the educated class which had adopted this attitude of bitter opposition to British rule; and the educated class as a whole formed less than one per cent. of the vast population of India. The political demands of the Congress, the preachings of Dayanand, the ravings of Tilak, seemed to be no more than a local ruffling of the surface-waters of a profound ocean. But the ferment was natural, and in many of its manifestations healthy. It was the inevitable consequence of the introduction of the new wine of the West into the old wine-skins of the East. And it was bound to grow, because the classes among which it had begun, though not numerous, wielded an immense influence. They held the ancient priestly leadership of the sacred Brahmin caste; and to this they added the control of all the newspapers, and of all the schools, and they included the whole legal profession. There were deep differences among them as to the extent to which change should go, and the forms which it should take. Few of them realised that the democratic idea was irreconcilably hostile to the fundamental tenets of Hinduism, and to the social order which Hinduism maintained. There could be no deeper difference than that which separated those who ultimately wished to repudiate and discard Western influences, and those who wished to reshape India in accord with Western ideas. But these differences were obscured so long as all could combine in criticism of the existing system of government.

Government was not blind to the significance of these movements or to their dangers. It did not believe that

in the then condition of India any sudden introduction of the institutions of self-government was feasible. But it made some concessions. In 1892 a representative element was for the first time introduced into the legislative councils. But this gave no satisfaction, because the elected representatives were outnumbered by official nominees; the real and effective control of Indian affairs still rested with the British administrators.

And, on the whole, the system of government still worked smoothly and well. In some ways it reached its apogee in the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1899-1905), when the splendour and pride of empire found a more grandiose expression than at any earlier time. The superb Durbar of 1903, held for the purpose of proclaiming the accession of Edward VII. to the imperial throne of India, outdid in magnificence anything that even India had ever seen; and to those who witnessed these splendours, and the display of loyalty by which they were accompanied, the Congress agitation and the ineffectual venom of the vernacular press must have seemed wholly negligible. Nor did Lord Curzon confine himself to the display of splendour and power. We have seen how a great military reorganisation and a reconstruction of frontier policy were effected under his régime. At the same time every department of administration was revised and overhauled, and the system attained a degree of efficiency unknown since Dalhousie's time. Moreover Lord Curzon undertook a new function hitherto strangely neglected: he devoted money, thought and energy to repair ing and tending the monuments of Indian history; and the tombs and palaces of the Mogul Emperors, the buried relics of the great Asoka at Sarnath, the remains of the great artistic achievements of the Buddhist period, were tended with a reverence never known before.

But there were two of the activities of this vigorous viceroyalty which aroused a bitter controversy that showed the strength of the Indian nationalist movement. Lord Curzon tried to reform the Universities (1903-4). They desperately needed reform. But it was unfortunate that the reform should have taken the shape of a tightened control by Government; for this was the sphere in which the educated classes were most deeply interested. Again, purely with a view to increased efficiency of administration, Lord Curzon divided the immense province of Bengal into two. The partition of Bengal, as it was called, was held by many Bengalis to be a violation of Bengali national sentiment.

Bengal, the province in which Western education had been carried furthest, and in which the abuses of the University system were at their worst, became the centre of a violent agitation which burst into flame immediately after Lord Curzon's departure from India, and gave the keynote of the period of strain which was to follow.

[V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*; Lovett, *Indian Nationalist Movement*; Lyall, *Life of Dufferin*; Scott, *Burma*; R. C. Dutt, *India in the Victorian Age*; Lovat Fraser, *India under Curzon*; Ilbert, *Government of India*; Holdich, *The Indian Borderland, 1880-1900*; Cotton, *New India*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW IMPERIALISM; AND THE RISE OF SOCIALISM

§ 1. *The Sources of the Imperialist Movement.*

It is very evident that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the character of the reigning political ideals by which men's minds were influenced was undergoing a rapid change, not only in Europe but in Britain and throughout the British Commonwealth. The aspirations after national independence and popular self-government, which had been the chief driving forces of the earlier part of the century, though not less powerful than before, were falling into the background, because in most cases they had largely been satisfied. Their place, as the dominant motives of political action, was being taken by different ideals, by the pride of empire on the one hand, and on the other by a desire to use the power of the State for the purpose of carrying out large schemes of social reconstruction. These new ideals were not incompatible with one another, any more than the nationalism and the liberalism of the earlier part of the century had been. Both influenced the thought of all political parties in all countries, in a greater or less degree. Both could inspire a genuine idealist fervour; both, in their more vulgar forms, were liable to be debased into a gross materialism.

In the British lands the imperialist temper of the time showed itself in two forms. It led to the complete abandonment of that unwillingness to assume new imperial responsibilities which had been so strongly marked during the previous period, and to the rapid annexation of vast territories in Africa, the Pacific, and the Far East which we have noted in an earlier chapter.[1] There was much that was repellent in the eagerness to acquire territory for the mere sake of acquiring it, the delight in 'painting the map red,' which helped to stimulate the immense imperial

[1] Chap. ii. p. 620.

activity of the time; and there was too exclusive a concentration upon the profits that might be made out of colonial possessions. Alongside of these motives others were at work, a desire to keep existing markets open, a real sense of the obligation of carrying civilisation to the backward peoples, which Kipling called 'the White Man's burden,' and a still powerful sentiment, inspired by the missionaries, that the primitive savage ought to be protected in his rights and led gently into a better way of life. But the grosser motives on the whole predominated; and for that reason many felt that there was hypocrisy in the emphasis laid by poets and politicians upon the more exalted motives, and swung back into an indignant repudiation of imperialism and all its ways.

But alongside of the imperialism of acquisition, which naturally bulked large in the era of partition, there was another imperialism, the imperialism of unification. With a sort of shock of delight the men of this generation rediscovered the British Empire. They began to take pride in the marvellous achievement which had brought one quarter of the population of the earth into a single fellowship of peace. They saw themselves as citizens of something far wider than a little nation-State, concentrated exclusively upon the pursuit of its own interests. They realised that they were bound by an infinite diversity of mutual obligations to people of almost every race and creed and colour. They recaptured something of the ideal which had inspired the Radical Imperialists of the 'thirties, Durham, Molesworth and Wakefield, the ideal of a partnership of free peoples united by the common enjoyment of the institutions of political liberty; and, regarding no longer with complacency but with dismay the idea of a dissolution of this august fellowship, they set themselves to give greater reality to the haphazard and accidental bonds by which alone it seemed to be held together.

In truth the Commonwealth ideal had never died out, even in the period of self-complacency when it seemed to have been forgotten in high places. It had been strongest in the colonies, because they were conscious of their weakness: the tradition of the United Empire Loyalists never died in Canada; from Australia suggestions of imperial federation came as early as the 'fifties. Even in Britain, despite all appearances, the sense of imperial unity, as we have already noted,[1] never vanished. But it was in the

[1] Above, Bk. x. chap. iv. p. 514.

'eighties, when all the world was competing for colonial dominions, that the imperial idea began to take possession, no longer merely of a few enthusiasts, but of the national mind in Britain. In this change of outlook no small part was played by a little book, Seeley's *Expansion of England* (1883), a lucid and suggestive review of the long process, extending over three centuries, whereby the British Empire had been established. Disencumbered of detail, it brought out in bold outline the nature and significance of this astonishing achievement; and it impressed upon its myriad readers the conviction that the growth of the Empire had been the outcome not of a deliberate lust for power, but of the undirected and fecund energy of the British people. With Seeley's book may be coupled *The Influence of Sea-Power in History* (1890), by an American naval officer, Captain Mahan, which shed a new light on modern history by bringing out the supreme importance of the part played by the British Navy in the rivalries of the European Powers, and by exhibiting sea-power as the support of oversea dominion. A still more powerful literary force appeared with the publication of Rudyard Kipling's stories and poems in the years following 1886; for Kipling had a power of appealing to ordinary men which no great literary craftsman since Dickens had equalled, and he drew his inspiration from the imaginative appeal of the British Empire. His vivid and virile tales and verses threw the glamour of romance round the obscure deeds of soldiers on the Indian frontiers, of administrators grappling with difficult tasks in loneliness, of bridge-builders and road-makers, of pioneers in strange places, of rough sailormen in tramp steamers. The reader of these glowing tales was made to feel pride in the work of his race-fellows upon an infinite variety of manful tasks in many climes and in the service of all manner of men.

The politicians were also at work. In 1884 an Imperial Federation Society was founded; it had for its first Presidents the Radical Forster and the Liberal Lord Rosebery. The tradition of the old Radical Imperialism was reviving, and henceforth there was always a powerful imperialist element among the Liberals, though the Liberal party as a whole was less sympathetic to these ideas than its rival, and for some years (1898-1906) there was a definite cleavage in the party on this issue.

Formal schemes of imperial federation, indeed, made no headway. But the sentiment which inspired them found

other modes of expression. In 1887 Queen Victoria celebrated the jubilee of her accession to the throne; and this was made the occasion of a pageant of empire such as had never been seen in the world before, not even in the greatest days of Rome. The amazing procession of princes and fighting-men, drawn from every part of the world, which passed through the streets of London, brought home to the popular imagination, as nothing else could have done, the pride and pomp of empire. The Crown, as the symbol of the long history of the British peoples, and as the sole formal link which bound them all together, was the natural centre of this demonstration; and a succession of stately royal ceremonials drove home the impression created by the pageant of 1887: the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901, the Coronation of King Edward VII. in 1902, the magnificent Durbar in which the King's succession to the imperial throne of India was proclaimed in 1903, the tours of the Prince of Wales in various parts of the empire, all contributed to impress the popular imagination with a sense of the magnitude and variety of the amazing fabric of power which had been built up during three centuries by the peoples of the islands.

Moreover these celebrations were used as occasions for conference between the leading statesmen of Britain and those of the self-governing dominions; and there was also a conference of colonial ministers at Ottawa in 1894. These Colonial Conferences (1887, 1897, 1902) had, of course, neither legislative nor executive power. But they were the first occasions on which the statesmen of the empire took counsel together; they helped mutual understanding; they caused all the members of the Commonwealth to think of it as a single whole. The colonies began to advocate a system of imperial preference. Some of them, notably Australia and South Africa, began to make voluntary contributions to the upkeep of the navy, the whole burden of which had hitherto fallen upon the mother-country. Increased attention began to be paid to inter-imperial communications, whether by cable or by steamship routes.

The leading statesmen of the great colonies became familiar figures in Britain, and the names and persons of Laurier, Seddon and Reid were better known than those of many British ministers. But the outstanding and typical figure of the time was Cecil Rhodes, whose whole public career, from his election to the Cape Parliament in 1880 to his death in 1902, fell within the period under review.

This millionaire idealist, this combination of visionary, company-promoter and chauvinist, who used gigantic commercial undertakings as instruments for the extension of empire, who conceived such grandiose projects as the proposed railway from the Cape to Cairo, and whose whole life and strength were given to the ideal he had conceived, with a devotion as simple and unreserved as that of any saint or missionary, was the very embodiment of the reigning idea of his time. We shall have to deal elsewhere [1] with his work in South Africa, and its momentous consequences; here we are concerned with him only as the standard-bearer of an idea. At the age of nineteen, during a long journey over the veld, he had undergone an experience almost like that of religious conversion; he had become convinced that the best hope of peace and justice for the world lay in its being brought under the leadership of the English-speaking peoples, and he solemnly vowed himself to the service of this astonishing aim, from which he never swerved. It was not of mere world-dominion that he dreamt. He insisted upon complete local freedom in his own colony of South Africa; he believed that the strength of the British system lay in its combination of freedom with unity; and for this reason he subscribed largely to the funds of the Irish Nationalist party, holding that the concession of a generous measure of Home Rule was in accord with the true imperial tradition, and would strengthen instead of weakening the Empire. The ideal which inspired him was that of a world-girdling partnership of freedom and peace, in which he hoped that America and Germany might become willing partners with the British Commonwealth; but the means whereby he pursued this aim were not always scrupulous. He had at the same time a real sympathy with the native peoples, as he showed both in Cape Colony and in Matabeleland; but he held that it was essential for their own welfare that they should be brought under European, and preferably under British, control: he wanted all Africa to be British. It was to find the means for achieving these ends that he built up his colossal fortune, for he was himself a man of very simple tastes; and when he died it was found that he had left the bulk of his fortune to turn his beloved Oxford, which he regarded as the very hearth and altar of the English spirit, into a centre for the training in comradeship of the best men from all the Dominions, from America, and from Germany. There was nothing mean or cowardly.

[1] Below, Chap. viii. p. 712 ff.

about Cecil Rhodes: he served the cause to which he gave his allegiance with the self-abandonment, and also with the adaptability of method, of a Jesuit missioner.

§ 2. *Imperialism in Action.*

The date at which the imperial idea became the dominant factor in British policy is very clearly fixed: it was the moment when, after the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill in 1886, Gladstone's ministry gave way to a Conservative ministry under Salisbury. The defeat of Home Rule was itself, in part, an expression of imperialism: one of the grounds on which Home Rule was most strongly denounced was that it would involve 'the disruption of the Empire.' The Salisbury Government entered vigorously into the scramble for Africa, and secured for Britain territories far more valuable than those obtained by any other Power; it arranged the imperial pageant of 1887, and summoned the first Colonial Conference; it laid the foundations of the modern British navy by the Naval Defence Act of 1889, which was based upon the standard that the navy must be superior to those of any two other Powers.

The Liberal ministry of 1892-1895 followed in the footsteps of its predecessor; for Lord Rosebery, who was at first Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister, was as keen an imperialist as Lord Salisbury. But the Liberals were divided on these questions; and the division was one of the causes which weakened them. It was because he disapproved of the large programme of naval construction adopted by his colleagues in 1894 that Gladstone retired from the premiership; and the cleavage between imperialists and anti-imperialists broke the Liberal party in twain during the following years.

But the high tide of imperialism came with the formation of the administration of 1895, in which the Liberal Unionists joined forces with the Conservatives. This ministry reconquered the Sudan, drove France out of Fashoda, sent Lord Curzon to India to define a new frontier policy, held the great pageants of 1897, 1901 and 1902, fought the South African War, and swept the country in what came to be known as the 'khaki election' of 1900. The South African War was, indeed, the culmination of the imperialist era. We shall discuss it elsewhere, in relation with the history of South Africa.[1] But it was far more than a South African

[1] Below, Chap. vi i. p. 714 ff.

event. It demonstrated the reality of imperial unity, by bringing volunteer forces from all the great Dominions to fight in a common cause; and for the first time in history the spectacle was offered of men gathered from every continent, from Europe, Africa, Asia, America, Australasia, in the conviction that they must stand or fall together. This impressive demonstration—all the more impressive because the sentiment of the civilised world was almost unanimously hostile—had a lasting effect; it was the first common effort of the whole Commonwealth, and it was not to be the last. But if in this sense the South African War marked the apogee of the imperialist movement, it also brought about a reaction. It had a sobering as well as a stimulating effect; there were many who, rightly or wrongly, felt nothing but shame at the crushing of the Boer republics, and learnt to think of Empire as a sort of Juggernaut to which cruel sacrifices had to be made; the humiliations and the long delays of the war damped down the exultant and flamboyant temper of the 'nineties; and, like men becoming sober after a carouse, many Englishmen began to be ashamed of the rather blatant chauvinism of that period.

The dominant figure in British politics during these years of high imperialism was Joseph Chamberlain, the stormy Radical of 1885. Even in his Radical days he had always been an imperialist; though he vigorously supported the Gladstonian policy in the Transvaal and the Sudan, he was, according to John Bright, 'the only Jingo' in the cabinet of 1880. He did not forget his early zeal for social reforms, and the reforming measures or promises of the Salisbury Government owed a good deal to his influence; but now his social enthusiasm was merged in, and dwarfed by, the imperialist ardour of which he became the spokesman. He came to believe that not only freedom and power, but economic welfare and social health, depended upon the pursuit of an imperial rather than a national policy.

In 1895 Chamberlain could have had almost any office he chose, for he was now recognised as the most forceful personality in British politics. He chose the Colonial Secretaryship, hitherto regarded as a post of secondary importance; and the very fact that the most commanding figure in the ministry was the spokesman of the colonies implied a vital change in the attitude of Government toward imperial problems. It is not possible to name any specific legislative or administrative act of Chamberlain's period of office which could be described as initiating a new

departure in policy; yet his tenure of the Colonial Office did genuinely mark a turning-point in the relations between the mother-country and the daughter-nations. The tone of his despatches and speeches, the spirit in which he welcomed proposals from the colonies, his persistence in keeping imperial problems in the foreground, his emphasis upon the necessity of 'thinking imperially,' on the one hand kept the mind of the British people awake to the fact that they were not an isolated nation, but one member in a great partnership of nations; while on the other hand these things dispelled the belief, hitherto widespread in the colonies, that Britain was indifferent to their welfare. The conviction grew that New Zealand and Jamaica were just as intimately members of the British Commonwealth as Devon and Lothian; and this conviction had a great deal to do with the zealous loyalty of the Dominions during the South African War, when the sentiment of the civilised world was almost unanimously hostile to the British cause.

When the ordeal of war came to an end, Chamberlain was eager to find some means of consolidating and strengthening the imperial unity which common effort had fostered. With the example of Germany in his mind, he conceived the idea of an imperial *Zollverein*, like that which had given to Prussia her first hold over the other North German States. In effect he was returning, though in a new form, to the old idea of basing imperial unity upon a system of trade relations, which Britain had pursued from 1660 to 1782. The first step towards a *Zollverein* would be a system of imperial preference. Already several of the Dominions had made suggestions which pointed in this direction. In 1887 Cape Colony had proposed that a duty of 2 per cent. should be levied upon foreign imports into every part of the Empire, the proceeds to go towards the upkeep of the navy. In 1897 Canada had given a substantial preference on imports from Britain or other Dominions, and Cape Colony, Australia and New Zealand later granted similar preferences. But Britain could make no response without abandoning her free-trade methods. Chamberlain resolved that she must be persuaded to do so. In 1903 he resigned from the ministry in order to devote himself to the advocacy of this cause; and for several years a fierce controversy on 'tariff reform' engrossed the attention of the British electorate. As Chamberlain himself frankly acknowledged, no preferential tariff would be of much use to the Dominions unless it included duties on food-stuffs, which formed the staple

Dominion exports to Britain. Even if the country had been ready to abandon the system of Free Trade, the proposal to tax food would have ensured the failure of the scheme, especially at a time when, as in the years following the war, trade was bad; and the chief result of Chamberlain's great campaign was to give to the Liberals an unprecedented majority in the election of 1906.

That election marked, indeed, the end of the period of exultant imperialism. Some results of the imperialist period were lasting; the British people had acquired a new conception of what empire might mean, and had realised more clearly than ever before the significance and the value of a partnership of free and kindred peoples. But the more grandiose and flamboyant ambitions of the previous decade had lost their attractiveness. In the light of the humiliations of the war, the incompetence which it revealed, and the difficulty of the problems which it left for solution, the confidence of a Kipling or a Rhodes in the inherent capacity of the British people to rule the world seemed a little absurd. Moreover other interests and ideals were demanding attention. Large claims of social reconstruction had been getting a progressively clearer expression throughout the imperialist period; from 1906 onwards they exacted the first place in the thoughts not only of Britain but of all the British lands.

§ 3. *The Growing Demand for Social Change.*

Throughout the imperialist period, and in every civilised country, there was a continuous and persistent agitation for large measures of social reconstruction, and a long series of experiments in social legislation. Everywhere democracy had been established, in form if not in fact; everywhere the democracy had obtained, through popular education, access to the keys of knowledge; and the educated democracies were not content to be used as mere tools in the process of wealth-making for the benefit of the few, but were beginning to demand that the power of the democratic State should be used to bring about a more equal distribution of wealth, and to secure for all men a fuller enjoyment of the good things of life.

It was in this period, as we shall see,[1] that the remote and comparatively isolated communities of New Zealand and Australia took the lead of the rest of the world in a remarkable series of social experiments. In this period also

[1] Below, Chap. vii. pp. 696 and 700.

Bismarck was so much alarmed by the progress of the Social Democrats in Germany that he devoted all his strength to combating them, first by means of repressive measures (1878), and then by endeavouring to outbid the popular Socialists by means of a bold policy of State Socialism, which included schemes of State insurance against sickness (1883), accidents (1884), and old age (1891). Yet the German Social Democrats, who took the doctrines of Marx as their creed, progressed with astonishing rapidity; the votes which they cast in Reichstag elections rose from 400,000 in 1878 to 3,000,000 in 1903. Germany had, in fact, become the centre of the Socialist movement, just because, owing to Government opposition, the Socialist party was better organised in Germany than elsewhere. But the movement was almost equally active among the manufacturing populations in every other advanced European State; and the Socialist demand—the demand that the power of the State should be unflinchingly used to bring about an economic readjustment among its members—had everywhere become, by the end of the century, the most living problem of domestic politics.

This was quite as true of Britain as of any other State. 'We are all Socialists now,' said Sir William Harcourt in 1888; and Harcourt was a Gladstonian Liberal, as little in sympathy with the more advanced social movements of his time as with its imperialist temper. He did not mean, of course, that Socialism was generally accepted in the narrow sense in which it advocates State ownership of all the means of production. He meant that the old doctrinaire objection to any State intervention in economic questions was dead; and in face of the long series of Factory Acts and Workmen's Compensation Acts; in face of the Poor Law and the Education Acts: in face of all the drastic Irish Land Acts which the Liberals themselves had passed; in face of the infinitely varied activities of municipal bodies in all parts of Britain, which were, at the cost of the ratepayers, placing within the reach of every man facilities in some respects greater than rich men could command two generations earlier, the statement was justified in the sense in which he made it. In truth even the Liberals, despite their individualist traditions, were undergoing during this period a progressive change of attitude; many of them were learning that their trust in individual character and ability as the source of human progress could not be justified by a mere removal of restrictions on individual effort, since

that must have the effect of leaving the weak at the mercy of the strong; they were beginning to hold that (to use the phrase of the Liberal philosopher, T. H. Green) 'it is the business of the State to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible'; and the implications of this judgment may be far-reaching.

The humanitarian spirit, still actively at work, but becoming more sensitive, was no longer content with mere charity; it demanded fellowship and mutual comprehension between the more and the less fortunate members of society. This temper found expression when in 1883 the Oxford scholar, Arnold Toynbee, took up his abode in the east end of London, in the hope of studying the social problem, not as a theorist or statistician, but with the knowledge of friendship. From this beginning sprang the University Settlement movement, with the foundation of Toynbee Hall in 1885; its results have been great, though not measurable. Sympathetic social inquiries began to be undertaken, of the kind of which Charles Booth's monumental *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889-1913) was the greatest example. In all this work there was an implicit assumption that destitution and degradation were preventible maladies, which ought not to be regarded with self-complacent pity, or dealt with by a condescending and unavailing charity; maladies of the social order, which affected all classes, and which must be healed by communal action, based upon scientific study. And alongside of these intellectual and humanitarian activities there was a religious revival which powerfully tended in the same direction. In 1878 William Booth gave a military organisation, and the name of the Salvation Army, to a Christian mission which he had been conducting for some years. Booth had a genius for inspiration and organisation comparable with that of John Wesley; and although the sensational methods which he employed were regarded with disdain by the cultivated, they had an astonishing success among unlettered and degraded men and women, many of whom were inspired to miracles of self-devotion. In 1890 Booth added a social side to his wide-ranging work, and the book, *In Darkest England*, in which he demonstrated the need and defined the methods of his campaign for the rescue of the 'submerged tenth,' had a potent influence in destroying the self-complacency of the previous era, and in bringing home the conviction that there was something wrong with the social order which permitted the cruelties, the ugliness and the misery he described. From 1890

onwards the Salvation Army was engaged in heroic and revealing labours among the most wretched elements of the people, the dregs and sediment of an industrial society; and its labours were extended to almost every part of the world.

The Unionist Governments of 1886 and 1895 were not unsympathetic to the demand for social reform, which was thus growing in strength. Social reform as a substitute for political change was in the Disraelian tradition; the young Tory Democrats who found, for a time, a leader in Lord Randolph Churchill, were ready to go far in undefined directions; and Chamberlain had not lost the zeal for Radical reforms which had led him to enunciate the 'unauthorised programme' of 1885. The Government of 1886 introduced free education; it passed a new Factory Act which reduced the hours of labour for women and forbade the employment of children under the age of eleven; and it empowered the new County Councils, which it had set up in 1888, to borrow money for the purpose of creating agricultural small holdings. This Act had very little effect; but it was the first step towards the revival of a self-respecting peasantry in England. In the election of 1895 Chamberlain promised a system of old-age pensions: the promise was not fulfilled, the question being referred to a series of commissions and committees, whose conflicting reports formed an excuse for inactivity. But, indeed, the ministry of 1895 was too much engrossed in difficult problems of imperial and foreign policy to have much thought to spare for the problems of social reconstruction; and the only outcome of its zeal for this cause was a generous Workmen's Compensation Act (1897). After the 'khaki' election of 1900, and the conclusion of the South African War in 1902, there was greater opportunity for work of this kind, and two important enactments were passed between 1902 and 1905. The first was the Education Act of 1902, a measure of momentous importance, which for the first time created a coherent educational system in England; but its significance was obscured by the virulence of the opposition it aroused by its treatment of the religious problem. The second was the Licensing Act of 1904, which dealt with a social problem repeatedly but unsuccessfully tackled by the Liberals since 1871. It had the effect of reducing very considerably the number of public-houses licensed to sell alcohol; but in doing so it endowed the licensee, for the first time, with a legal right of property in his licence, and this was the subject of bitter controversy.

§ 4. *The Rise of Doctrinaire Socialism and the Formation of the Labour Party.*

Meanwhile there was arising a demand for something much more sweeping than the piecemeal and empirical legislation of the older political parties: a demand for a complete reconstruction of the social order. During the 'eighties Socialism began to be actively preached in a sense far more precise and doctrinaire than that in which Sir William Harcourt used the term: and during the 'nineties the new gospel rapidly captured many of the Trade Unions. A fermentation of ideas began among the working classes of Britain like that which had marked the 'twenties and 'thirties; but with this difference, that in the 'eighties and 'nineties the fermentation was world-wide.

The beginning of the new movement may be traced to the American theorist, Henry George, whose book, *Progress and Poverty* (1880), had an immense circulation, and who popularised his theories by lecturing tours in Britain during the following years. George traced most social ills to a single cause, the system of private ownership of land: and he proposed a single remedy, the progressive taxation of land-values. He founded a school which still has many disciples; and his proposals, which seemed so simple, made men ready to contemplate the use of the power of the State with equal boldness in other spheres. Meanwhile, in 1881, H. M. Hyndman and others—later joined by the poet William Morris—had founded the Social Democratic Federation, which soon adopted the whole doctrine of Karl Marx, and looked forward to a complete and sudden transformation of the social order, perhaps by violent means. The Social Democratic Federation never included more than a few thousand members; and these differed so widely among themselves that, as early as 1884, they split into two separate and hostile organisations. They despised the Trade Unions, which would have nothing to do with them; for the leaders of the great Trade Unions in this period were cautious-minded men, and mostly convinced Liberals. The leading members of the 'S.D.F.' were largely, at first, enthusiasts of means and social standing. But they were able men and effective speakers, and they carried on a vigorous campaign which influenced many of the younger Trade Unionists, impatient of the old-fashioned Trade Union leadership. Among these were some young workmen of fire and vigour, notably John Burns. In 1886 and 1887, when trade was bad

and unemployment was rife, the agitation became so vigorous that some of the leaders hoped the revolution was at hand. They held excited demonstrations in Trafalgar Square; and in 1887 John Burns and his aristocratic comrade Cunninghame Graham were arrested and imprisoned for addressing such a meeting after it had been forbidden by the police.

Meanwhile, in 1883, another Socialist organisation, the Fabian Society, had been founded in London. As its name suggests, it was far indeed from desiring revolution; its aim was, by persistent and steady effort, and by the power of organised knowledge, to permeate gradually the whole governmental system, and to bring the Socialist State into being quietly and by constitutional means. The Fabian Society was always a small body. It worked not by declamation and mass meetings, but by investigation and research, as the Benthamites had done; and its leading members (notably Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb) were able to influence both legislation and administration in a remarkable degree, because they were always armed with full and exact knowledge on the subjects in which they were interested. Mr. and Mrs. Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* (to take a single example) put the whole Trade Union Movement in a new light, and deeply affected the policy of Governments in regard to it. While the Social Democrats were demonstrating in Trafalgar Square, the Fabians were permeating both political parties with their ideas, or with some of them. The leading Fabians were definitely Socialist in the sense that their ultimate aim was to bring industry under the direct control of the State. But they did not think of Capitalism as a fixed and static system that would or could be suddenly overthrown, but as something that was already changing, and could be gradually transformed by constitutional means.

In 1888 and 1889 a new element made itself felt. Trade Unionism, hitherto successful only in the more highly developed industries which could demand substantial contributions from their members and offer them solid benefits, suddenly extended its influence to the more depressed and unorganised industries. The match-girls and the gas-workers, previously unorganised, won great successes by means of strikes. And in 1889 the London Dock labourers, a group among whom effective organisation seemed to be impossible, because they were mostly casual and unskilled labourers, won a resounding victory in a great

strike which lasted for some weeks. They won because their needs and sufferings appealed to public support, which showed itself in very large contributions to the strike-funds. But they won also because they were led with immense fire and ability by John Burns and other ardent Socialist leaders.

The London Dock strike of 1889 had far-reaching results. It brought about a rapid expansion of Trade Unionism among the less-skilled and lower-paid trades, which had hitherto been regarded as hopeless. But the Unions in these trades could not exact large subscriptions from their members, and therefore could not depend upon their own strength like old and rich organisations such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers; political action seemed to present the only means whereby they could achieve their aim of improving their conditions of work. The New Unionism would inevitably have been driven to adopt a programme of political action—of relying on the State for betterment, and using their votes to compel the State to take the action they desired—even if their leaders had not been inspired by the ideas of State Socialism. And meanwhile, even in the older Unions, the younger men were beginning to revolt against the staid and conservative policy of their leaders, who held the view that Trade Unions should confine themselves to trade questions, and leave their members, as citizens, to support whatever party they preferred.

In 1892, inspired by this changing situation, a group of men, including the gentle and eccentric enthusiast Keir Hardie, founded yet another Socialist organisation, the Independent Labour Party. They were definite and proclaimed Socialists; but, unlike the Social Democratic Federation, they did not aim at a sudden revolution on Marxian lines. Nor did they despise the Trade Unions. Their aim was to create a distinct Labour party which should proceed by political action to capture the now democratic State; and their chief desire was to persuade the Trade Unions to identify themselves with this party, and thus to use the whole power of organised labour for the purpose of winning for their class, by constitutional means, control over the machinery of government. The Independent Labour Party, like the Social Democratic Federation, never had many members; and their first electioneering experiments, in 1895 and in 1900, were very unsuccessful, though in 1892 Keir Hardie had been elected, and had shocked

the House of Commons by arriving in a cloth cap and a scarlet tie, under the escort of a brass band.

But meanwhile a great change was coming over the Trade Unions; the new unskilled Unions had joined the Trade Union Congress; the younger men were gradually getting the upper hand in the older Unions; and the influence of the leaders of the Independent Labour Party was steadily exercised among them. Few of them were yet ready to commit themselves to a complete Socialist programme such as the 'I.L.P.' had adopted. But they were slowly coming to the view that independent political action was desirable. In 1899 the Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favour of such action, and appointed a Labour Representation Committee to draw up a programme of action. Next year (1900) the Labour party came into existence.

Thus, when the twentieth century opened, a new party, resting on very different foundations from the older parties, and drawing its resources from the contributions of myriads of workpeople, many of whom did not share its beliefs, had entered the political arena, and was ready to play its part in the next appeal to the electorate. The new departure was not taken without misgivings. There was opposition not only from the representatives of the older unionism, which had held that Trade Unions as such should take no part in politics, but even from some of the younger men. John Burns, who had been imprisoned for preaching revolutionary Socialism in Trafalgar Square in spite of police prohibitions, and who had led the Dock Labourers to their unexpected victory, was the strongest critic of the new policy, precisely because it emphasised instead of undermining class distinctions. 'I am getting tired,' he said, 'of working-class boots, working-class trains, working-class houses and working-class magazines. I believe . . . we should not be prisoners to class prejudice, but should consider parties and politics apart from all class organisations.'

But this sounded like a voice from the past; and in domestic politics, as well as in foreign relations, Britain was visibly on the eve of great changes when the twentieth century opened.

[Low and Sanders, *Political History of England, 1837-1901*; Paul, *History of Modern England* (to 1895); Gretton, *Modern England*; Whates, *Third Salisbury Administration*; Jeyes, *Life of Chamberlain*; Churchill, *Life of Lord R. Churchill*; Williams, *Cecil Rhodes*; Parkin, *Imperial Federation*; Egerton, *Short History of British Colonial Policy*; Beer, *History of British Socialism*; S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*.]

CHAPTER VII

NATIONALITY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE GREAT DOMINIONS

(A.D. 1880-1905)

§ 1. *The Nationhood of the Dominions.*

THE self-governing colonies had reached the stage of adolescence during the third quarter of the nineteenth century; during its fourth quarter they came of age, and they entered on the testing time of the twentieth century as free nations, full of pride in their nationhood. The consolidation of the national spirit in Canada, Australia and New Zealand is the main theme of this chapter; the troubled story of South Africa must have a chapter to itself.

But the growth of the national spirit did not involve any weakening of attachment to the mother-country, or of zeal for the ideal of imperial unity; only it was a unity of comradeship, not a unity of obedience, that was now pursued. The strength of the imperial sentiment was displayed not merely by participation in imperial celebrations like the jubilees, or in colonial conferences; not merely by offers of trade preference and of contributions to the upkeep of the Navy, the buckler and the pride of the whole Commonwealth; it was shown in the sending of small contingents to the Sudanese war, and still more in the common efforts and sacrifices of the South African War, the first British war in which all the partner-nations took a share. All the long generations in which the Empire seemed to be held together by the accepted authority of the mother-country had never seen any common effort that could be compared with this, in which the daughter-nations took part not under any compulsion, but of their own free will.

The mother-country, and the great Dominions themselves, now alike recognised that the Dominions had ceased to be dependent colonies, and had become free nations, ach proud of its own distinctive character and modes of life. This was expressed by certain changes in nomenclature made at the beginning of the new century, which had more

than a verbal significance. The conference of 1902 was the last *Colonial* Conference: its successor in 1907 was denominated the Imperial Conference. The word 'colonies' was banished from the official vocabulary, so far as concerned the great Dominions, as no longer representing the facts. And when King Edward VII. came to the throne, his titles underwent a significant alteration. 'The Dominions beyond the Seas' were named, alongside of the United Kingdom and the Indian Empire, as distinctive members of the great fellowship over which the successor of Alfred the Great and Robert Bruce was now called to preside. These may seem petty things, but they meant much: in a community so tenacious of ancient forms and usages as the British, such verbal changes are always the expression and recognition of profound changes of fact.

Nor must it be forgotten that the generation during which the self-governing Dominions came of age was filled with the rivalries of Great Powers in every corner of the earth. Foreign policy was more complex and more dangerous than ever before: an unsolved difficulty in any part of the world might plunge the whole Commonwealth into war. Realising this, the Dominions began to demand that they should be more fully consulted in the determination of foreign policy, especially on issues in which they were directly involved. The numerous vexed questions which had to be discussed with the United States were no longer decided by the British Foreign Office alone: Canada had her own representatives to serve with those of the mother-country. Australia and New Zealand insisted, with success, on making their voices heard in the determination of the problems of the Pacific. Cape Colony realised with a shock that negotiations in which she had no share had given her as an immediate neighbour the formidable military power of Germany. The necessity and the methods of participation by the Dominions in the direction of foreign policy had not yet become fully apparent when the twentieth century opened; but the problem was being raised. It was already plain, before this period ended, that the British Commonwealth was rapidly assuming a new form, for which nothing in history afforded either analogy or guidance.

§ 2. *Canada: Material Expansion and Political Stability.*

One of the most remarkable features in the political history of Canada has been the extraordinary stability of

the Dominion Government, and the long life of its ministries; and this in spite of the fact that no rigid party organisation has grown up comparable with that of the United States, or even with that of modern Britain. Sir John Macdonald, at the head of the Conservative party, held power from 1878 till his death in 1891, and the Conservatives, though weakened by his death, succeeded in retaining power until 1896. Then Sir Wilfrid Laurier formed a Liberal ministry which held office continuously until 1911, when a new Conservative ministry was formed under Sir Robert Borden, which lasted until the end of the Great War.

There is no parallel in any other country under parliamentary government, except New Zealand, to these long ministries; and the ministries in the provinces were, in many cases, equally long-lived. The explanation of this striking and distinctive feature of Canadian politics casts much light upon political conditions in the Dominion. One reason is that the Canadians have been content with the two traditional parties, both of which draw their adherents from all classes and from all parts of the country, and therefore equally represent the solidarity of the nation. There was no strong Socialist movement in Canada, no attempt to form a class-party of Labour; and perhaps this was due to the fact that Canada had very little poverty, and very few huge fortunes. The strongest element in the Canadian people has always consisted of the class of small farmers working their own land; and even when manufacturing and mining industries became important, as they did during this period, although there were Trade Unions and strikes, there was no such class-bitterness between employers and employed as existed in other countries.

A further reason for the long tenure of ministries is that there was no sharp cleavage of opinion between the parties, no deep difference of principle. For both parties the supreme aim was national consolidation and development; and whether Liberals or Conservatives were in power, Canada was engrossed chiefly in the opening up of the country by the construction of new railways, and in the exploration of its mineral and other resources. These were the supreme questions of the period; and the epoch-marking event, in internal policy, was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, begun in 1881 and completed in 1885—a momentous and gigantic enterprise which was only made possible by liberal support from Government. It was in part the failure of the Liberal Government of 1873-1878 to carry

out this great design which brought Sir John Macdonald into power; and his success in bringing it to fruition was an important factor in consolidating his power. For the Canadian Pacific Railway not only opened up a vast area of inexhaustible riches, it bound the wide Dominion together with links of steel, and vitally helped to turn it into a united nation.

The building of the Canadian Pacific line made possible the development of the enormous and fertile plains which stretch from the Great Lakes to the Rockies, and thus united British Columbia with the Eastern provinces. It was not until the 'nineties that the settlement of these great corn-lands seriously began, and not until the opening of the twentieth century that their development became rapid. Before this could happen, some troubles had to be faced with the half-breeds who were thinly settled in these regions. In 1885 they broke into revolt, and Louis Riel, the rebel of Manitoba in 1870,[1] returned from his refuge in the United States to lead the rising. In 1870 British troops had to be borrowed to quell the rebellion; that of 1885 was suppressed by contingents drawn from all the provinces of the Dominion; and this first united campaign did something to strengthen the sentiment of Canadian nationality.

There was, indeed, only one question of principle on which there was any real division between the two political parties: the Liberals were inclined to favour Free Trade, or at any rate lower duties, while the Conservatives definitely advocated Protection. Sir John Macdonald's first act, when he came to power in 1878, was to set up a high protective tariff, which has proved the basis of the Canadian fiscal system ever since. Every successive election showed that the national mind accepted the policy of protection, which was advocated mainly as a means to national consolidation and development. Without it most Canadians felt that their country must fall into economic dependence upon the United States, which before the enactment of Macdonald's tariff had flooded the country with its products while refusing to admit Canadian goods; and it was complained that a large proportion of the immigrants into Canada were attracted over the frontier by the prospect of employment in American factories with which Canadian manufacturers could not compete. For a long time the Liberals were inclined to adopt the view that it was impossible for Canada to avoid economic dependence upon the

[1] Above, p. 517.

United States; and in 1887 and the following years they advocated an economic union of the two countries under a common tariff, or, failing that, an arrangement for reciprocity. But the national sentiment of Canada would have nothing to do with these proposals, which seemed to run counter to the twofold political ideal of Canada, national independence, and partnership in the British Commonwealth. It was not until the Liberals had changed their attitude on this question that they were permitted to regain power in 1896; and the Liberal Prime Minister, Laurier, acted in accord with national sentiment when he maintained the tariff that protected Canada from subordination to the United States, while giving a preference to Britain of 12½ per cent. of the amount of the duty (1897): this was later increased first to 25 and then to 33⅓ per cent.

A resolute determination not to be brought into any subordination to her great neighbour was thus one of the keynotes of Canada's policy during these years; and it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the attitude of watchful suspicion which this determination inspired began to be abated. There were many controversies between the two countries, and a series of conferences, in which Britain had to play the delicate part of supporting the Canadian claims without quarrelling with the United States. In 1886 there was a dispute over the seal-fishery in the Bering Sea, where American cruisers had arrested Canadian fishers sixty miles from the shore: it was ended by an amicable adjustment whereby the rules of seal-fishery were laid down. The fishing rights of Americans in Canadian waters formed another subject of controversy in 1887; and Joseph Chamberlain crossed the Atlantic to act with Canadian representatives in a new conference. Their labours were wasted, because the United States Senate refused to ratify the agreement which was reached. In 1897 an attempt was made to settle a number of outstanding differences; but this also came to nothing, because the prolonged deliberations were interrupted by a new dispute, which suddenly became acute in 1903. A rich gold-field had been discovered at Klondyke in the Arctic Canadian territory of the Yukon, in the remote North-West. The only outlet was through the long strip of Alaska which runs down the western coast of Canada, and which had passed under American control when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867. Canada was eager to have access to the head of one of the long inlets which

pierce the coast; and an acute controversy raged as to whether this point was within Alaskan territory or not. In the end the question was settled by a joint arbitration, in which two Canadians and the British jurist Lord Alverstone were ranged against three Americans. Canadian opinion was indignant at the decision, which left the disputed point in the possession of America; the two Canadian arbitrators refused to sign the award; and there were bitter complaints that Canadian interests had been sacrificed by the mother-country to suit the purposes of her own diplomacy. But there is little doubt that the award (which turned upon the interpretation of a treaty between Britain and Russia in 1825) was substantially just; and since that date there have been no further disputes between the two neighbour nations, who thrive side by side separated by a purely artificial frontier three thousand miles long—the longest unfortified frontier in the world.

In some of these negotiations the attitude of the United States was needlessly unbending and exacting; and indeed there was always a substantial body of opinion in the United States which wished to use their economic strength and their other advantages to force Canada, with all its immense undeveloped resources, into the Union; the imperialist spirit was as strong in America during the 'nineties as in the European countries. But by 1904 these ambitions had been, for the most part, abandoned. They had been abandoned just because Canada had succeeded in consolidating her national life and in securing her economic independence. Her illimitable resources had begun to be seriously exploited; her rich grain-lands, capable of feeding half the world, were being peopled by enterprising farmers; her coal-fields, unsurpassed by any country in the world save her great neighbour, were beginning to be developed; her inexhaustible wealth in all the metals was being revealed; her unsurpassable wealth of water-power, and her magnificent waterways, were being turned to use; and the tide of immigration, which had somewhat slackened during the previous years, was turning in full volume towards her shores. No country in the world has a more splendid economic future than Canada; and the Canadian people, proud of their country's greatness, were equally proud of her institutions and her traditions. Canada had become a nation. She was no longer a mere colony in British leading-strings; nor had she any intention of allowing her nationhood to be merged in the mighty republic her neighbour.

Her function seemed to be that of a link and a mediator between the British Commonwealth and its eldest but long-alienated child.

§ 3. *New Zealand: Bold Social Experiments.*

The smallest and the most remote of the great Dominions, New Zealand is also the most purely British of them all, and perhaps the most passionately loyal to the imperial connexion. In size, in climate, and in physical characteristics these lovely oceanic isles more closely resemble the parent-land than any other country; and their people are of almost purely English and Scottish stock. There is no country in the world more fit to breed a stalwart, healthy and independent race.

In the crucial period of development with which we are now concerned, New Zealand formed a sort of link between Canada and Australia. She resembled Canada in the facts that she had already achieved her unity; that the bulk of her people were engaged in agricultural and pastoral work, only a very small proportion of them dwelling in large towns; that there was a wide diffusion of comfort among her people, and an almost complete absence of the class-bitterness which was beginning to play so important a part in the life of Australia and of Britain; and that, for this reason, no class-party arose to complicate her politics, which continued to be controlled by the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties, both drawing their adherents from every section of society. On the other hand, she resembled Australia in the boldness of the social experiments which she launched during these years; in her unwillingness to welcome immigrants, even of British origin, who might possibly lower the standard of life of her people; and in the zeal with which she pursued the ideal of national self-sufficiency. In the pursuit of this national policy her statesmen, of both parties, showed no lack of courage. Untied by allegiance to any doctrinaire theories, and unhampered by rooted traditions or obstinate vested interests, they boldly splashed out into the deep waters of political experiment, feeling that their distant and happy isles offered an ideal field for these endeavours, which could be easily reversed if they proved unsuccessful.

This period of New Zealand history falls into two very clearly marked sections, a time of stagnation and depression (1879-1895), when the population was almost stationary, immigration ceased, and even the birth-rate fell in an

alarming way; and a time of rapidly growing prosperity and increasing population during the decades following 1895. During the first period New Zealand was suffering from reaction after the over-rapid and partly fictitious development of the previous period,[1] when the population had been multiplied fivefold in twenty years. This swift expansion had been largely due to a lavish expenditure of borrowed capital; and it was inevitably followed by a time of slow recuperation, during which Conservative ministries pursued a policy of cautious economy.

But in 1891 the Liberals came to power, at a moment when the Trade Unions were beginning to put forward distinct Labour candidates; and, perhaps incited by this fact, entered upon a remarkable programme of financial and social reconstruction, which attracted to New Zealand the attention of the whole world. The Prime Ministers responsible for these bold departures were John Ballance (1891-1893) and Richard Seddon (1893-1906). Seddon was one of the most remarkable figures among colonial statesmen of the period. A Lancashire working-lad, who had tossed about the world and followed many trades, he had no knowledge of history or economics, and the working out of the measures with which his Government was associated was due mainly to some of his colleagues, notably W. P. Reeves. But Seddon was a man of irrepressible and ebullient energy, and of unbounded self-confidence; he had a rough, hearty, downright kind of eloquence which was exceedingly effective; he knew how to deal with men, and did not disdain to play upon their weaknesses; and his restless vigour, and fearlessness in dealing with complex subjects which he had never studied, had much to do with the rapidity with which the new policy was put into effect. It may be added that he was a flamboyant imperialist; and when he came to England for the Colonial Conference of 1897, he made a marked impression. He, and the Canadian Laurier, and the South African Rhodes, gave to many home-keeping Britons a new impression of what the British Empire meant.

The social experiments of the Ballance-Seddon ministry fall under four main heads, those dealing with land, those dealing with industrial regulation, those dealing with finance, and those dealing with immigration.

The main aim of the land-policy was to prevent the formation of very large estates, to break up those that already

[1] Above, p. 523

existed, to encourage closer land-settlement, and to prevent speculation in land. For these purposes a progressive land-tax was imposed, rising from nothing on small holdings of less than 500 acres to 3d. in the pound on the capital value of very large estates—the land being assessed apart from buildings. Thus the large landowner had to pay heavily, while the small landowner got off scot-free. At the same time municipalities were also empowered to levy a rate on the unimproved value of urban land. With this scheme of taxation (which tended to make the holding of large estates unprofitable, especially if they were left idle) was combined a method of letting unoccupied Crown lands, instead of selling them, the State thus retaining ultimate proprietorship; while a system of compulsory purchase of land for small holdings was applied on a large scale, the funds being advanced by the State. Within twenty years of these enactments there were over 25,000 State tenants in New Zealand as against 45,000 freeholders; but the State tenants were all agitating for the right to purchase their holdings. There can be no doubt that this system encouraged closer settlement, and brought about a great increase in the number of small farms.

The industrial policy of the Seddon Government was even more distinctive than its land-policy. Its aim was to encourage the growth of Trade Unions, and at the same time to put an end to strikes. Conciliation Boards, including representatives of employers and employed, were established to facilitate settlements of industrial disputes by agreement; but if they should fail, the questions were referred to a national Arbitration Court, which had power to settle wage-rates, hours of labour, and all the other conditions of industry, its awards having the force of law: any employer, workman, or Trade Union that disregarded them was made subject to heavy penalties. The system has not fulfilled all the expectations of its devisers; but it has by no means been a complete failure. It has raised money-wages to a high level, and defined the hours and conditions of labour in one trade after another on terms very favourable to the worker.

Meanwhile many other sweeping measures of reform had been undertaken. A system of old-age pensions was established; the State undertook insurance work; it bought and worked coal-mines for the supply of its railways; it borrowed money on an immense scale for the construction of railways and other public works, increasing the public

debt from £25,000,000 in 1880 to £70,000,000 in 1904; but most of this represented reproductive expenditure. The burden of taxation necessary to meet all these charges was very heavy. It was met in part by a progressive income-tax, and by heavy death-duties on large fortunes—fiscal devices which were almost contemporaneously introduced in Britain. But it was also met by a high protective tariff, which was in any case necessary if the high wage-rates were to be paid without killing industry. High tariffs meant high prices; so that most of what was gained in wages was lost by their diminished purchasing power. But the system fostered the rise of certain manufacturing industries, which became important during this period.

When the twentieth century opened, New Zealand was enjoying, like Canada, a wave of prosperity, and the standard of life of her people was as high as that of any other country. This may have been due, and probably was in part due, to the agrarian and industrial policy which she had adopted, though Canada had attained equally good results by different methods. But, rejoicing in their widely-diffused comfort, the New Zealanders adopted a policy in regard to immigration the very opposite of that which Canada was following. They deliberately discouraged immigration, lest their standards of life should be beaten down. An Immigration Act passed in 1899 helped them to exclude Chinamen, Japanese and South Sea Islanders: they were resolved to keep their stock pure. But they also discouraged European and, to some extent, even British immigration. They thus retarded the rate at which the country could be peopled, especially as the birth-rate fell in proportion as the standard of comfort rose. Numbering only three-quarters of a million when the twentieth century opened, they set themselves to reserve for their own use a land far larger than they could fully occupy, and far larger than they could defend if they should be attacked; with the result that, though only sixty years had passed since the first white settlement, actually over 90 per cent. of the population were New Zealand-born at the time of the Great War. A very distinctive social life, and a very pure racial type, were thus being established in the most remote, beautiful and homelike of the British Dominions.

§ 4. *The Unification of Australia and her Social Problems.*

It was not until almost the end of our period (1900) that, following in the wake of Canada, Australia adopted a

measure of federation and became a single nation. For that reason, the story of Australian development during these years is more confused than that of the other Dominions. Yet, with one exception, the conditions of the six colonies were so similar that it is possible to describe in general terms the main features of their history.

The exception was Western Australia, which had been a poor, small and stagnant community ever since its foundation in 1827, because almost the whole of its vast extent consists of desert land, offering no such opportunities for tillage or pasture as the more fertile lands of the eastern colonies. In 1880 the population of Western Australia was still under 30,000, and she had not yet obtained responsible government. But during the 'eighties and 'nineties rich gold-fields were discovered in the heart of the desert; and by the end of the century Western Australia had outstripped all her sisters in gold-production. This involved a rapid inrush of population, mainly from among the miners of the other colonies; it involved also the construction of railways; and it encouraged agriculture in the narrow cultivable belt on the coast. By the end of the century the population had risen to nearly 200,000; and this sudden change in the character of the colony brought with it (in 1890) the establishment of responsible government; the Cinderella of the Australian family had taken her place beside her sisters.

In Australia, as in New Zealand, the period falls into two clearly marked sections; but the 'eighties (when New Zealand was suffering from depression) were a time of great though somewhat factitious prosperity; the 'nineties (when New Zealand was reviving) were a time of grave economic disturbance, when acute labour troubles, financial panic, and drought combined to bring about serious depression. This contrast between the two decades was reflected in the history of Australian politics. One of its consequences was a marked decline of immigration. In the 'eighties the number of immigrants was higher than in any decade since the gold discoveries of the 'fifties; in the 'nineties and the early years of the twentieth century immigration almost ceased. This startling change was due in the first instance to the deterrent effects of economic troubles; but these were presently reinforced by the adoption of a deliberate policy of discouraging even European immigrants, lest they should lower the Australian standard of life, or compete with Australian labour.

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During the prosperous period of the 'eighties, the course of politics in the various States followed customary lines. There were conflicts, especially in Victoria, between the two Houses of Parliament, ending in the reduction of the second chambers to subordination. There were the usual disputes between the 'ins' and the 'outs,' for no fundamental difference of principle separated the two parties from one another on any question but that of tariff policy. On the whole, Free Trade had the upper hand in New South Wales down to 1900; whilst the other States, especially Victoria, had adopted a definitely protectionist policy. Perhaps the most important achievement of the period was that, without losing her pre-eminence in sheep-breeding, Australia developed into one of the most important corn-growing regions of the world: the area under tillage was multiplied threefold in Victoria, and nearly fourfold in New South Wales, between 1881 and 1901. This was largely due to changes in the land-laws, which rendered more intensive settlement possible.

Yet in spite of this healthy development, Australia presented a feature unique among young countries in the extraordinarily high proportion of her population congregated in a few big towns. One fifth of the total population is to be found in the four capital cities, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane, in which the manufacturing industries are concentrated, and which (since all of them are seaports) control the bulk of the export trade: Melbourne for a long time included practically half of the whole population of Victoria. Of the remainder, a substantial proportion consists of the mining population, which is large in all the States, and which is mostly congregated in compact masses. The results are, not only that the capital cities dominate their States to an extent unknown in other countries (for even in industrial lands there are many rivals to the capitals), but that the industrial and mining population wields an influence out of proportion to its weight in the life of the community. These facts have largely contributed to determine the modern history of Australia.

In such conditions, Trade Unions were certain to be strong, well-organised, and centralised; and during the second part of the period they began to dominate the political situation. When the inevitable reaction took place after the exaggerated prosperity of the 'eighties, the wage-rates of the boom years had to come down. But naturally the workmen did not see why this should happen; and a period

of acute and violent trade conflict opened. It began as early as 1884, among the coal-miners of New South Wales. In 1890 it developed into the nearest approach to a universal strike which any country had yet seen; even the shearers on the sheep-runs were called out. It has been suggested that the remarkable strikes of 1890 were largely influenced by the success of the London Dock strike of the previous year, to which the Australian Unions had made very generous contributions. But strikes in periods of bad trade never have much prospect of success; the formidable movement of the whole Australian Trade Union world was completely defeated; and the Trade Unionists began to turn their thoughts to other means of attaining their ends.

It is possible that the labour unrest (which did not end in 1890—there were new strikes of a serious kind in 1892 and 1894) contributed to the next calamity which fell upon Australia: a general collapse of credit, which began in 1893, made investors in all parts of the world shy of trusting their money to Australian concerns, and produced ruin. And to this had to be added a series of dry years, culminating in the terrible drought of 1902, which decimated the flocks. It is not surprising that in these circumstances emigration to Australia should have come to a standstill.

Such were the conditions which brought about, during the 'nineties, two very important new departures in Australian politics: the formation of Labour parties in each of the colonies, for the purpose of achieving by political means what strikes had failed to achieve; and the initiation of new methods of dealing with labour disputes, similar to those adopted during the same years in New Zealand.

The first considerable achievement of an organised Labour party was in New South Wales, at the election of 1891, when thirty-five Labour members were elected; but the other colonies quickly followed the New South Wales example, and when the first Commonwealth Parliament was elected (1901), a Labour party made its appearance there also. Neither in the Commonwealth nor in any of the States had Labour won a majority before the close of the period with which we are concerned in this chapter; but by playing off the two older parties one against the other, and holding the balance between them, Labour was largely able, from the first, to dictate the course of policy. Two features of the Australian Labour party deserve to be noted. In the first place it was quite definitely a class party, controlled by the Trade Councils; in South Australia it was even laid down

that none but manual labourers might be admitted. In the second place, Australian Labour devised a system of discipline more rigid, and more destructive of free deliberation, than any party organisation (save the Irish party in Britain) has ever conceived. Every Labour member was required to take a pledge to vote according to the decisions arrived at beforehand by the caucus—to disregard, that is to say, whatever facts or arguments might be advanced during the course of a debate. The rigidity of this pledge was later modified, so far as the Commonwealth Parliament was concerned; but it was a new thing in British politics.

Legislation on trade disputes began in Victoria in 1896, when an Act was passed setting up Wages Boards and a Court of Industrial Appeals, which were given powers to fix wages in defined trades for defined areas; South Australia followed the Victorian precedent in 1900; while New South Wales in 1901 and Western Australia in 1900 and 1902 passed Acts more closely modelled on the New Zealand method. Finally, in 1904 the Commonwealth Parliament established an Arbitration Court for disputes affecting more than one State, the Court to consist of a Judge of the High Court. These varied systems had merely been brought into operation, and had scarcely yet had time to show how they would work, when our period came to an end.

But, interesting and important as they were, all these experiments are of minor importance in comparison with the great achievement of the period, the federation of the six States to form the Commonwealth of Australia. The desirability of federation had long been felt; it had been advocated as early as the 'fifties, and provision for it had been deliberately introduced into the Acts whereby the Imperial Parliament established responsible government in Australia. A Federal Council, indeed, had been formed; but it was rendered of no effect by the facts that it was purely deliberative, and that New South Wales persisted in standing aloof from it. Closely kindred as they were, the colonies had been so widely separated that the working of a central government would have been difficult. Now improved communications were bringing them more closely together; the need for welding them yet more closely by inter-State railways was felt; and the community of their problems and of their interests was yearly becoming more manifest. But the factor which made combination seem most obviously necessary was the appearance of other European Powers in the Pacific, and the rise of the power of Japan.

Serious discussion of the proposal to federate began as early as 1891, and continued throughout the 'nineties. Many obstacles had to be overcome, notably the unwillingness of New South Wales to abandon her Free Trade system, which she knew would have to be sacrificed once federation was achieved. But at length, in July 1900, an agreed scheme was submitted to, and accepted by, the Imperial Parliament; and on January 1, 1901, the first day of the new century, Australia began her career as a single united nation.

The frame of government of the Australian Commonwealth in some respects followed more closely the model of the United States than that of Canada. It reserved a higher degree of independence to the States than the Canadian system, giving to the federal Government only certain specific powers defined in the Act, and leaving all others to the subordinate legislatures; and the use of the term 'State' in place of the Canadian term 'province' was a sign of greater tenderness for State rights. It established also a Senate on the American pattern, consisting of an equal number of representatives from each of the component States, and a High Court, not unlike that of the United States, which, besides deciding appeals, would have the function of interpreting the constitution. In all these respects the American rather than the Canadian model was followed. But there were two important points in which American precedent was disregarded, and one of these was of fundamental importance. An easy mode of altering the constitution was defined—by a vote of Parliament confirmed by a majority of States and a majority of the total electorate—in place of the reference to the British Parliament provided by the Canadian Act. And, yet more important, the essence of the British system, and the main distinction between it and the American system, was preserved by making the executive dependent upon the legislature. This meant that a Prime Minister of Australia, like a Prime Minister of Canada, would be able to speak in the name of a majority of the representative body, and to count upon its support in carrying out any recommendations he might put forward; whereas an American President may, and often does, find himself in conflict with, and his action nullified by, a hostile majority in either House of Congress. And because of this—because all the British lands have adopted the same principle in determining the relationship between the executive and the legislature—it

has been made possible for all the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions to act jointly with the Prime Minister of Britain in advising the Crown on questions of common imperial concern.

The third of the great Acts of Federation which have shaped the modern British Commonwealth had thus been adopted at the opening of the new century. The fourth, that of South Africa, was soon to follow; but not until after many troubles.

[Egerton, *British Colonial Policy*; Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*; Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*; Bourinot, *Constitutional History of Canada*; Egerton and Grant, *Canadian Constitutional Development*; Porritt, *Sixty Years of Protection in Canada*; Grant, *History of Canada*; Parkin, *Sir John Macdonald*; Reeves, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*; Rogers, *Historical Geography of Australasia*; Drummond, *Life of R. S. Seddon*; Lyne, *Life of Sir H. Parkes*; Bryce, *Modern Democracies*.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE CRISIS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

(A.D. 1879-1902)

At each stage in the history of the British Commonwealth during the nineteenth century, South Africa has demanded more of our attention than any other of the great Dominions, because her double racial problem created difficulties more complex than those presented by any other colony. In 1878 there seemed to be reason for hoping that these troubles were nearing their end. Cape Colony had at last obtained responsible government, and its Dutch and British settlers were working together harmoniously; Natal was peaceful; the native tribes, apart from the Zulus, had accepted the reign of law; the Orange Free State, under Brand's wise rule, had become the model of an orderly and peaceable farmer-State; the anarchic and unruly burghers of the Transvaal, hitherto the chief source of unrest, had been brought under British control and promised self-government; and a federation of the South African States under the British Crown, which Sir Bartle Frere had been sent out to organise, seemed to be within reach.

But these hopes were doomed to disappointment. The twenty years following 1878 were full of anxiety; the alarms and controversies with which they were filled had their culmination in a difficult and trying war, which for a time seemed to endanger the existence of the British power in South Africa; and the common effort on the part of the whole British Commonwealth which it demanded ended one era, and opened another, in British history.

§ 1. *The Zulu War, Majuba, and the South African Republic.*

The trouble began with the Zulus. When the Transvaal Boers were taken under British protection (1877),[1] King Cetywayo felt that his prey had been snatched away from

[1] See above, Bk. x. chap. iv. p. 530.

him. He became restless and aggressive; his war-bands, organised for conquest, were straining at the leash. The High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, thought it necessary for the safety of South Africa to demand a change in the Zulu military system; and when Cetywayo refused to attend to this demand, war began (1879).[1] But the first episodes of the Zulu war were unfortunate. A disaster at Isandhlwana threatened to expose Natal to the horrors of a Zulu invasion; perhaps the threat would have materialised but for the heroism of the defenders of Rorke's Drift; and though the Zulu army was crushed at Ulundi (1879) and Cetywayo was deposed, British military prestige was seriously impaired.

Meanwhile the Transvaal Boers were becoming more and more resentful of British control, to which many of them had given only the most unwilling assent. The promised establishment of self-government was delayed; farmers who had refused to pay taxes to their own Government were angered by the strictness with which payment was now exacted; and the British administration under Sir Owen Lanyon was anything but tactful. In two ways, also, the Zulu war helped to precipitate a crisis: on the one hand it removed the danger of a Zulu attack which had persuaded many Boers to assent to annexation, while on the other hand it seemed to show that the military power of Britain was not very formidable.

When, in 1880, Disraeli was succeeded in office by Gladstone, who had strongly condemned the annexation, the Boers hoped that their independence would be at once restored. But this hope was disappointed. Gladstone, being assured that most of the Transvaalers were content, would not cancel the annexation, but would only promise self-government as part of a scheme of federation. Thereupon the more irreconcilable of the Boers broke into revolt, set up a provisional Government, isolated the small and scattered British garrisons in the Transvaal, and prepared to invade Natal. It seemed mere madness for these untrained farmers, who at this date numbered not more than 8000 or 10,000, thus to challenge the British Empire. In truth, they were quite unaware of the magnitude of the power they were attacking; and their resistance must inevitably have been crushed if the war had been fought out.

But Gladstone hated war, and hated still more the idea

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*e*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*d*).

of forcibly imposing British dominion upon unwilling subjects. As soon as the revolt began, he made haste to open negotiations, which went on alongside of the early fighting. In the rough mountain-country of the Natal border,[1] the Boers showed themselves to be both brave and skilful fighters, and their admirable marksmanship, combined with their cleverness in using natural cover, enabled them to outmanœuvre the little British army of some 1400 men, with which General Colley was trying to defend the frontier until larger forces could be brought into the field. After several minor successes, the hardy farmers scored a sensational victory on February 27, 1881. The mountain of Majuba, which commanded the important pass of Laing's Nek, had been occupied on the previous night by Colley with some 500 men; and the gallant Boers, crawling up the steep slope under cover, succeeded in overwhelming this little force, and killing the general and some 90 of his men. In itself the fight of Majuba had no military importance. So insignificant a check could have done nothing to prevent the victory of the armies that were already beginning to arrive in South Africa. But the Boers did not realise this; and when the British Government refused to allow the negotiations to be broken off merely for the sake of proving the strength of Britain at the cost of many lives, the Boers not unnaturally concluded that fear rather than magnanimity was their motive.

Five months after Majuba a peace was concluded, whereby the Boers were granted complete autonomy under British suzerainty, with the proviso that their relations with foreign States should be subject to the control of the British Government. Not only the Boers themselves, but all South Africa, regarded this treaty as an abject surrender on the part of Britain; and there seems little reason to doubt that what was meant as a healing act of magnanimity actually helped to produced the friction which filled the following years. Three years later (1884) the terms of the settlement were revised in favour of the Transvaal by a new document known as the Convention of London, which omitted the preamble of 1881 and its reference to suzerainty, but preserved the stipulation that the Boers should make no treaty with any other 'State, nation or tribe,' save the Orange Free State, without the approval of the Crown. Apart from this provision the Transvaal was left in complete independence; and it was allowed to assume the style of

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*e*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*d*).

the 'South African Republic,' a name which ominously suggested the large ambitions that were fermenting in the minds of its leaders.

The settlement of 1884 removed the idea of a federated South Africa from the sphere of practical politics for twenty years. Once again, and more obviously than before, the Transvaal, which now enjoyed a prestige such as had never before belonged to it, became the centre of Dutch racial feeling; and South African politics were increasingly embittered by racial animosities. Even in Cape Colony, where harmony seemed to have been established, a Dutch organisation known as the Afrikander Bond was instituted in 1882. It had its annual conferences, its branches in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and its special newspapers preaching racial antipathy. South Africa seemed to be in danger of being plunged back into the almost forgotten bitterness of the 'thirties.

§ 2. *Paul Kruger and Cecil Rhodes.*

The ten years following 1884 saw the gradual development of two conflicting ideals for the future of South Africa; and the spokesmen and standard-bearers of these rival aims were two men who resembled one another in nothing save their courage, their determination, their masterful wills, and the obstinacy with which they clung to the vast and ambitious projects they had formed. These men were Paul Kruger the Dopper Boer, and Cecil Rhodes the millionaire imperialist.

Kruger, as a boy of twelve, had been among the earliest of the Boer trekkers from Cape Colony in 1836, and had played his part in all the turbulent story of the Transvaal. He had been present on Dingaan's Day, when the migratory farmers had broken the Zulu host;[1] he had taken part in many fierce attacks on native tribes; he had been a commandant in the raiding band which sacked Livingstone's mission station; he had been one of the leaders of the Transvaalers who had tried in 1857 to force the Orange Free State into subjection; he had fought against President Burgers' attempts to introduce order in the Transvaal; he had protested against the British annexation, yet had for a time held office under the British Crown; he had been the leading spirit in the revolt of 1880, and one of the triumvirate who constituted the provisional Government. Now,

[1] See above, Bk. IX. chap. x. p. 430

in 1883, he became President of the young republic; and continued to hold that office, not without opposition, until the republic was brought to an end in the second Transvaal War. He was the very embodiment of the Transvaal tradition. Shrewd, masterful and obstinate, he drew his inspiration from the Bible, and especially from the Old Testament. He belonged to the Doppers, the most narrow and bigoted of the three sects into which the Dutch Reformed Church was divided; and he instinctively compared his own people with the Chosen People who had come out of Egypt, the Bantu tribes with the Canaanites whom it was their divinely appointed task to enslave or destroy, and the British power with Pharaoh, King of Egypt. The dream of his heart was to make all South Africa Dutch, and to drive the British into the sea.

Though he had strength and obstinacy, Kruger was not a great administrator; and during the first years of his rule (which was disliked and opposed by the more enlightened Boers) the Transvaal seemed to be falling back into the old lawless confusion. There were raids on all sides, as in the old days, in defiance of the boundaries defined by the Convention of London. One body of Boers made their way into Zululand, and founded what they called the New Republic[1] (1884): Britain recognised the New Republic, which was incorporated in the Transvaal four years later (1888), but thought it necessary to annex Zululand as a means of preventing further aggression. Swaziland was gradually brought under control between 1886 and 1894, though the independence of this region had been expressly recognised by the London Convention. Yet other bands of raiders entered Bechuanaland on the west, and founded the republic of Stellaland and Goshen (1883); but the British Government intervened, and sent an expedition to set up a protectorate over Bechuanaland (1885) with the consent of the Bechuanas. On the north, expansion into Matabeleland was also planned, though it was anticipated (as we shall see) by the British South Africa Company; while on the east Kruger was eager to gain possession of the coast, in order to have a port free from British control. Meanwhile, within the limits of the republic, the native peoples, who enjoyed in Cape Colony equal political rights with the white settlers, were denied every right of citizenship by an express provision of the constitution. Nor (with one exception)

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*e*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*d*).
[2] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*d*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*a*).

would the obstinate President enter into any defined relations with the other South African States. He refused to join the customs union which was formed by Cape Colony, the Orange Free State and (later) Natal, lest it might prove the means of extending British influence. But in 1889, after the death of President Brand, he persuaded the Orange Free State to sign a defensive treaty of alliance with him; and thenceforward the two independent Dutch republics were linked together over against the two British colonies.

So long as the Transvaal remained a disorganised and almost bankrupt republic of farmers, it might cause unrest, but it could not be formidable. But its independence had scarcely been established when discoveries were made which radically transformed the situation. In the very year of the Convention of London gold was discovered at Barberton (1884); and two years later the still more productive gold-field of the Witwatersrand—the richest gold-field in the world—was opened up. Thousands of gold-diggers, followed by other thousands of traders and shopkeepers and professional men, began to flock to Johannesburg, which, with a swiftness that surpassed even the records of California and Australia, sprang from nothing into a rich and prosperous city, with banks, churches, exchanges and newspaper offices. Johannesburg had 3000 inhabitants in 1887, 25,000 in 1890, and over 100,000 in 1896; and the immigration into some other parts of the Transvaal was only less sensational in its volume and rapidity. A very large majority of the immigrants were Englishmen, Scotsmen and Australians. Thanks to their activity the wealth of the country increased in geometrical progression. Within ten years the newcomers owned almost one-third of the land, numbered more than half of the population, and were paying almost the whole of the taxes. The South African Republic ceased to be an all but bankrupt State; it could dispose of immense resources, and equip itself, if need be, with armaments on the modern scale; and the younger generation of Boers were drawn out of isolation into the fertile and restless civilisation of the West, which Kruger hated.

Manifestly there was a danger that the Dutch farmers would be swamped by the newcomers, and that the country would be Anglicised. This would certainly happen if the immigrants were allowed political rights. Hitherto citizenship had been conferred on easy terms, as was natural in a

new country. In 1882, indeed, Kruger had raised the qualifying period of residence from two years to five. Now, in 1890 and the following years, he easily persuaded his Volksraad (Parliament) to stiffen the conditions progressively, in such a way as to exclude practically the whole of the new population. Not only were they denied the franchise, they were not even allowed the rights of municipal self-government in the city which they had created out of nothing; and in a city almost purely English the use of Dutch was insisted upon in the public schools. Petitions were in vain; equally vain were the remonstrances of the British Government. 'This is my country,' said Kruger in reply to a deputation of 'Uitlanders' or foreigners, 'these are my laws. Those who do not like to obey my laws can leave my country.'

Nor was this all. Under the new conditions, men accustomed to modern methods had to be employed in administration. For this purpose Dutchmen and Germans were imported from Europe, notably a very able young Dutchman named Leyds, who obtained a great ascendancy over the shrewd old President. Profitable monopolies (the sale of dynamite, for example, which was indispensable for the mines) were granted to these men; and the construction of the necessary railway facilities was entrusted to a group of Dutch or German concessionaires, who set themselves to divert the whole traffic of the Transvaal away from the Cape and towards the Portuguese ports in Delagoa Bay. When the mineowners tried to protect themselves against the prohibitive rates charged for transit from the Cape railways by organising waggon-transport, Kruger responded by closing the 'drifts' or fords across the Vaal.

Many of the Boers, perhaps a majority, disliked and opposed this policy. In 1893 they put up a rival candidate for the Presidency, but though it was widely believed that he had obtained a clear majority, the declared result gave a small majority to Kruger. By that time the Uitlanders, who were creating the country's wealth but had no political rights save that of paying heavy taxes, were becoming desperate; they had formed a Reform Union, which was at first joined, not by the mining magnates (who feared to anger the old President), but mainly by artisans and professional men; and they were demanding equal political rights, and claiming the protection of Britain as the suzerain Power.

From the Transvaal it is instructive to turn to the two

British colonies, where complete equality of civil rights existed between the two white races, while in Cape Colony (though not in Natal) natives were admitted to the franchise. In 1893, when her population included some 50,000 whites, Natal obtained responsible government. Being the most British of the South African States, and the nearest neighbour of the Transvaal, Natal watched with anxiety the development of Kruger's policy. But in the Cape this anxiety was yet greater; for there was good reason to fear that the racial antipathies which Kruger was fomenting might find an echo in the parent settlement; and the activities of the Afrikander Bond threatened to make politics turn upon questions of race. The chief safeguard against this danger was the existence of complete political equality between the two white races. Moreover the leader of the Bond, J. H. Hofmeyr, was a man of great shrewdness and real moderation, by no means blind to the advantages of partnership in the British Commonwealth: it was he who suggested in 1887 the levying of a duty throughout the empire for the support of the navy.

But the dominating factor in Cape politics during these years was Cecil Rhodes.[1] He had set before himself the aim of making British influence supreme throughout South Africa, an aim to which Kruger and his policy formed the greatest obstacles. His chief weapon was commercial organisation. Already a power in the diamond-fields of Kimberley, he was also deeply concerned in the gold-mining industry of Johannesburg, was intimately in touch with all that went on in that restless city, and sympathised keenly with the grievances of the Uitlanders. But his supreme interests were political rather than commercial. It was his influence which persuaded the British Government in 1885 to proclaim a protectorate over Bechuanaland. Though it is an unfertile region, Bechuanaland has been described as the key of South Africa: it separated the Transvaal from the recent German settlement in South-West Africa, and it opened the way to the rich territories of the Zambezi valley. Already European prospectors and Boer explorers were making their way into this region, which Livingstone's journeys had revealed, and were trying to extort concessions from Lobengula, the warrior-king of the Matabele. In 1888 a British agent succeeded in obtaining from Lobengula a grant of the exclusive right to exploit minerals throughout his territories; and next year, 1889, Rhodes established

[1] For a sketch of Rhodes, see above, Chap. vi. p. 677.

the British South Africa Company, with a charter from the British Government, and power to open up and colonise a vast and vaguely defined territory extending from the northern borders of the Transvaal to Lake Tanganyika. During the following years agents of the Company, notably Dr. L. S. Jameson, were at work founding settlements, opening mines, erecting telegraphs, and pushing forward railway lines towards the Portuguese coast on the East. Kruger was outflanked and encircled; and a Boer raid across the Limpopo, attempted in 1891, was firmly turned back. What with the Uitlanders within the Transvaal, and this movement of encirclement beyond its borders, patriotic Boers might well feel that their cherished civilisation was threatened with extinction.

Meanwhile Rhodes had become, in 1890, Prime Minister of Cape Colony. Firmly believing in equality of rights between the two white races as the only foundation of healthy development in South Africa, he made an alliance with Hofmeyr, the leader of the Afrikander Bond; and being thus able to count upon the support of both races in Cape Colony, he wielded for six years almost dictatorial power. Undeniably he used his power well. He spared no pains to cultivate friendly relations between Dutch and English. He took a keen interest in education. He worked out a sympathetic and enlightened native policy. These six years, 1890-1896, were in truth the crown of Rhodes's career. Cape Colony was prosperous and undisturbed; Natal and the Orange Free State were joined with it in a Customs Union, and all three were impatient of Kruger's impracticable obscurantism. Away in the north the great new realm of the South Africa Company was developing rapidly; in 1893 an outbreak of the Matabele, who were impatient of finding their standing victims, the Mashonas, withdrawn from their attacks, was brilliantly crushed, and the Company's sway was unchecked; in 1895 this great dominion was christened Rhodesia in honour of its founder —an honour the like of which no other man has ever received in his lifetime. Kruger and Krugerism were penned in on every side; and the Transvaal Boers of the younger generation were becoming impatient of Kruger's methods. Time and patience, it seemed, were alone needed, and Rhodes's ideal of an equal partnership of the two races, united together in a great federation under the ægis of the British Crown, would come to realisation.

But Rhodes was wilful, autocratic, impatient, ever

haunted by a sense of the shortness of life. He could not wait upon the course of events. The Uitlanders in the Transvaal were planning an armed rising to secure redress for their wrongs. Rhodes lent himself to the plot, and helped to supply the plotters with money and arms, while his friend Jameson assembled a small force in the Company's territories near to the border. The plan was that the Uitlanders were to seize Johannesburg and Pretoria, while Jameson was to come to their aid. But Jameson recklessly invaded before the conspirators were ready, and on January 2, 1896, was ignominiously forced to surrender, while all the Johannesburg leaders were arrested. This mad filibustering expedition had in truth ruined the Uitlanders' cause; and it directly played into Kruger's hands.

§ 3. *The Causes of the South African War.*

The Jameson raid was a turning-point. It brought Rhodes's political career to an end. It aroused the sympathies of the Cape Dutch for their fellows in the Transvaal, and closed the era of friendly co-operation between the two races. It restored Kruger's dwindling prestige; for it persuaded the reforming Boers in the Transvaal that their freedom was threatened, and caused them to draw together. It discredited Britain in the eyes of the world; for though the British Government had no knowledge of the miserable plot, and though the High Commissioner issued a strong proclamation forbidding British subjects to take part as soon as he heard the news, the world naturally regarded the episode as a proof that Britain was aiming at the destruction of Boer independence; and the later course of events was universally interpreted in the light of this sordid episode. But the most significant fact of the moment was the despatch by the German Emperor of a telegram in which he congratulated Kruger upon having dealt with the raid 'without appealing to the help of friendly Powers.' This phrase was equivalent to an announcement that in the event of future trouble, the Transvaal might count upon German support; and, so construed, it contributed to determine the direction of Kruger's policy during the next four years. At the same time it was a warning to Britain that Germany, towards whom she had been anxiously friendly, must be regarded as a possible enemy.

For a time the disastrous fiasco of the Jameson raid kept the Uitlanders quiet about their grievances; it had put

them out of court. But inevitably the agitation revived; and in January 1899 21,000 British subjects in the Transvaal forwarded a petition to the Queen asking for protection and redress. Their demand was for equal political rights for all white men, such as existed in every British dominion, including Cape Colony. But the British Government was faced by a serious difficulty in putting forward this demand: the Convention of London, though it vaguely referred to 'suzerainty' in the preamble, did not give to Britain any power of interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal; and Kruger, and indeed the whole Boer people, refused to admit any claim of suzerainty. Sir Alfred (later Lord) Milner, who had been High Commissioner since 1897, urged that Britain should formally demand a five-years' franchise for the Uitlanders, and this policy was adopted by Chamberlain and the home Government. On the other hand, Kruger demanded that any question in dispute should be referred to arbitration, which implied that the Transvaal was an entirely independent State. Between these positions compromise was almost impossible.

It seems plain that Kruger was prepared for war, and desired it, being confident that he could drive the British into the sea: he was sure of the Orange Free State, and with its aid could dispose of at least 60,000 men—a far larger force than Britain could easily bring into the field; he had accumulated great stores of munitions; he underestimated the military power of Britain; and he probably counted upon German help. At a conference with Sir Alfred Milner at Bloemfontein (June) he refused to yield to the British demands. The British Government, having expected him to give way, awoke suddenly to the realisation that the attitude it had adopted was leading it into a difficult and serious war, though even yet it did not understand how serious; and it began to send troops to South Africa, which was almost undefended. In October Kruger launched an ultimatum demanding the immediate withdrawal of the British troops, and requiring an answer within forty-eight hours. To such a demand there could be no answer. The day after the ultimatum expired Boer troops invaded Cape Colony; and the most serious ordeal by which the British Commonwealth had been faced during the nineteenth century had begun.

§ 4. *The South African War.*

The most striking feature of the war which thus began was the sharp conflict between the opinions about its causes

and aims which were held on the one hand by the majority throughout the British Commonwealth, and on the other hand by a minority in these lands and by the weight of foreign opinion in all countries. To the greater part of the civilised world, and to a substantial minority in Britain, the war appeared to be a cynical attack by a vast and powerful empire upon two little farmer-republics, an attack which was engineered by mining magnates and financiers for the purpose of getting possession of valuable gold-fields. To the majority of British people it appeared as a war for equality of rights, and against the iniquity of racial ascendancy; a war of defence, moreover, against a small but restless and aggressive State which had been a source of disturbance for many years. There has never been a time when Britain has been the object of a more virulent or contemptuous anger: that was one side of the picture. But, on the other side, there had never before been displayed so remarkable a voluntary rally of free peoples to a common cause, or so unwavering and impressive a demonstration of loyalty and comradeship, as the action of the great Dominions exhibited; for all of them sent contingents of volunteers, and continued their support steadfastly till the end.

Britain realised with a shock that, apart from her own daughter-nations, she had no friends in the world, and that, but for her mastery of the seas, she might have been exposed to a combined onslaught by the other imperialist Powers, like that which had nearly ruined her in the crisis of the American War of Independence. Her isolation seemed anything but 'splendid,' and the South African War was soon followed by a change of policy. On the other hand she learnt that the imperial tie was infinitely stronger than any one had expected; and this lesson also had lasting effects. In this sense the war was the culmination of British imperialism; but in another sense it marked the beginning of reaction. Men asked whether this destructive and wasteful conflict could not have been avoided; whether it was not in part due to the arrogant spirit bred by the easy conquests and annexations of the previous decade; whether even the causes for which it was professedly fought would not have been better served by patience; whether it was in accord with British traditions to strive to destroy a little nation that had struggled to preserve its nationhood, even if it was in some respects reactionary and intolerant. The flamboyant temper of the previous era went out of fashion; and much bitter feeling was stirred.

We shall not attempt any detailed narrative of the war, which lasted two and a half years. It fell into three clearly marked periods. The first, which lasted four months (October 1899-February 1900), saw the Boers taking the aggressive, and winning marked successes.[1] They attacked the British colonies in four directions, besieging Mafeking and Kimberley in the west, invading Cape Colony in the south, and bursting into Natal in the east. The Natal campaign was the most important: the Boer leaders seem to have hoped to overrun that colony swiftly, and to reach the sea, and a striking success of this kind might have had momentous results: it might have raised Cape Colony, and possibly brought about European intervention. This hope was not fulfilled. But White's army was penned into Ladysmith, and Buller's attempt to relieve it was held up at Colenso; while in the west a British army despatched to relieve Kimberley was stopped dead at Magersfontein, and in the centre another army was beaten at Stormberg. These three staggering blows were all struck in the second week of December, while the three besieged towns, Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith, were holding their own with difficulty. This 'black week' had a sobering effect upon the British people, who had expected an easy victory; and British prestige underwent an eclipse. Yet the plain fact was that the Boer advance had spent itself; it made no further progress; and this meant that the ultimate defeat of the Boers was assured.

These checks produced an immense outburst of warlike enthusiasm both in Britain and in the Dominions. Large forces of volunteers were raised; contingents poured in from the Dominions; and Roberts and Kitchener, the most famous of living British soldiers, were put in command of the greatest armies that Britain had ever placed in the field. In February they were ready to advance. They swept up through the Orange Free State, relieving Kimberley on the way; caught and annihilated the main western army of the Boers at Paardeberg; caused the relief of Ladysmith by this pressure in the west; and captured Bloemfontein (March, 1900). The possibility of a Boer victory had vanished, and the two Presidents sought peace on the basis of the *status quo ante*; but they were refused, and Roberts's advance continued. He pressed on into the Transvaal, and occupied Johannesburg and Pretoria (June 5). By October all the main centres in both republics were in British occupation,

[1] See the map, Atlas, 5th Edition Plate 64 (*d*) and (*e*), 6th Edition Plate 89 (*a*) and (*d*).

and Kruger had fled to Europe. The second phase of the war was over; the annexation of both republics to the British Empire was proclaimed; and Lord Roberts returned to England, having, to all appearance, accomplished his task.

But the brave Boers were far indeed from acknowledging defeat, or accepting the destruction of their national existence. They broke up their field armies; but with a multitude of small commandoes they waged a brilliant and baffling guerilla, whose heroes were Botha, the commander-in-chief, De Wet, and De La Rey. This phase of the struggle, which was extended to the western part of Cape Colony, lasted for a year and a half, and was extraordinarily difficult to deal with. Every farmhouse was a place of refuge for the elusive Boers; farmhouses therefore were burnt in scores, and the women and children were removed to concentration camps. In the end an elaborate system of blockhouses formed the basis of a new plan of campaign by means of which Kitchener wore down the heroic resistance of the farmers; and on May 31, 1902, the Boer leaders accepted the Peace of Vereeniging. The terms of this treaty were significant. The Boer farmers became citizens of the empire against which they had been fighting. They were guaranteed against any infringement of their liberty or their property. They were promised the establishment of a system of self-government in the future. And the victors, far from receiving any recompense or indemnity for their immense sacrifices of life and money, actually undertook to supply £3,000,000 for the purpose of re-establishing the burghers in their farms.

It is not easy to find the record of any other treaty of peace in which the conqueror, without claiming any material advantage for himself, undertook to pay tribute to the vanquished. It may be said that Britain acquired the territory of the two republics; but she acquired them only in a nominal sense; she made, and could make, no profit out of them; and she pledged herself to restore them freely to their possessors as soon as the bitterness of war had died down. One thing alone was gained by this war: the establishment of equal political rights for both of the white races in the Transvaal as fully as it had existed in Cape Colony; and, by that means, the winning of a chance to banish that racial antipathy which had poisoned the history of South Africa ever since 1836. This had been, on the British side, the declared purpose of the war, and it was won at the cost

of an immense outlay of treasure, and the sacrifice of many lives. Perhaps, with patience, it might have been won without war; but it is also possible that if the war had not been fought when it was fought, South Africa would later have been the scene of a more dreadful conflict in which Germany might have taken a part.

South Africa could now look forward to a union of races and of States such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand had achieved. But this union, if it was to be real, could not be imposed by force; and though force had created the conditions which made it possible, it had inevitably left a bitterness which must form a grave obstacle. Many believed that at least a generation must pass ere the problem could be solved. It remained for the statesmanship of the next era to act courageously upon a more sanguine view.

[Lucas, *Historical Geography of South Africa*; Greswell, *Our South African Empire*; Theal, *South Africa* ('Story of the Nations'); Worsfold, *South Africa*; Doyle, *Great Boer War*; Maurice and Grant, *History of the War in South Africa*; Kruger, *Memoirs*; Williams, *Cecil Rhodes*; Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*.]

CHAPTER IX

UNSTABLE EQUILIBRIUM IN WORLD-POLITICS

(A.D. 1895-1905)

§ 1. *The Failure of Isolation: Britain and the United States.*

In an earlier chapter[1] we have seen how the world was gradually overshadowed, during the years from 1880 to 1895, by the menace of war which arose from acute commercial competition, from intense colonial rivalry, and above all from the heaping up of armaments by all the Great Powers of Europe except Britain. From 1895 onwards this vague menace became an ever present danger. No year was free from alarms. One after another vexed and difficult problems arose, now in the Far East, now in the Balkans, again in South America or the Pacific or South Africa.

In the course of these anxious years the British Commonwealth was forced to realise that the political isolation upon which it had prided itself was attended by grave dangers. During the early part of the South African War the Boers had good reason to hope that one or more of the European Powers would intervene in their favour; and if such intervention had taken place Britain would have had no friends or helpers save her daughter-nations, most of whom would have been exposed to serious dangers. The experience of these years led to a remarkable reversal of British policy, which showed itself first in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, and then in the *entente* with France in 1904. Now that international politics were no longer limited to Europe, but extended to every part of the globe, it had ceased to be possible to stand aloof from their complications. For good or for ill, as a result of the imperialist era, the world had become a single political system.

[1] Chap. i. p. 603.

Even the United States of America, in spite of their powerful tradition of aloofness from foreign entanglements, were being drawn into the sphere of world-politics, and were being captured by the imperialist spirit which dominated the rest of the world. The first important evidence of this took, indeed, the form of a reassertion of the Monroe doctrine, which warned off Europe from meddling in American affairs; but it was reasserted in a novel form, and in an imperialist spirit. For more than half a century a dispute had been dragging on between Britain and the disorderly South American Republic of Venezuela regarding the boundary between that State and British Guiana. Venezuela referred the matter to the United States (1895), which announced through its Secretary of State, Mr. Olney, that '3000 miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between an European and an American State unnatural and inexpedient'—a doctrine which challenged the very existence of the British Commonwealth, and was not likely to be acceptable, for example, to Canada. 'To-day,' Mr. Olney continued in still more challenging phrases, 'the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition.' This pronouncement for a moment brought war with America within the range of possibility, especially when the United States appointed a commission to define its 'fiat' upon the question in dispute. Fortunately the question was solved by a treaty of arbitration, whereunder two British and two American lawyers, under the presidency of a Russian jurist, gave a unanimous award (1899) strongly in favour of the British claims; and it is worth noting that the procedure of this tribunal became the model for the permanent system of arbitration set up in the same year by The Hague Conference.

Meanwhile, in another sphere, events had happened which at once illustrated the growth of the imperialist spirit in America, and helped to re-establish friendly relations between the two English-speaking Powers. In 1898 the United States were drawn into a war with Spain on the question of the misgovernment of Cuba. The sentiment of the whole world, save Britain and the British colonies, was as hostile to the United States in this war as to Britain in the South African struggle which began in the following year; and the practical manifestations of British sympathy with the United States did much to restore good feeling.

At the end of the Spanish War, the United States assumed a sort of protectorate over the republic of Cuba, and directly annexed Porto Rico in the West Indies, and the Philippine Islands in the China Sea. The United States had thus definitely entered the ranks of the imperialist Powers; and when, in the same year, they formally annexed Hawaii, which they had long informally controlled, and in the following year (1899) divided the Samoan group with Germany, it seemed that they had definitely broken with their long-standing tradition of isolation, and must henceforth play their part in the complex problems of world-politics. If they had frankly done so, the course of events during the next period might have been very different.

The American tradition of political aloofness was too strong to be so quickly broken. Yet there was one sphere of world-politics from which America could not wholly stand aloof, especially now that she had become a Power in the Pacific. This was the question of the Far East, the problem of China, in which during these years the European Powers had begun to busy themselves. Here the attitude of the United States was very much akin to that of Britain; for both desired that China should be left undisturbed to develop in her own way, while the other Powers were apparently eager to make use of the weakness of China for their own aggrandisement. If the English-speaking Powers could have frankly co-operated on this problem, both China and the world might have been saved from many ills. But apparently this was impossible; and the Far Eastern problem developed in such a way that it produced momentous and far-reaching consequences in world-history.

§ 2. *The Far Eastern Question and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.*

Japan's sensational victory over China in 1894 [1] came at a moment when the European Powers, having almost completed the partition of Africa and the Pacific, were looking about for fresh fields for their enterprise. Russia, in particular, who had been building the Trans-Siberian railway since 1891, was anxious to establish her foothold in the Pacific; France, having conquered Tongking, dreamed of

[1] See above, Chap. i. p. 619.

bringing Southern China under her influence; Germany, now eager for colonial possessions, was disappointed with what she had already obtained. These three Powers, therefore, in spite of their bitter rivalry in Europe, combined to order Japan to give up the Liao-tung Peninsula and the harbour of Port Arthur, on the ground that the owner of Port Arthur was the master of Peking. Britain stood aloof from this demonstration. Japan had to give way.

The three Powers had posed as protectors of the integrity of China. But the insincerity of this profession was soon demonstrated. In 1897 two German missionaries were murdered in the rich province of Shantung. On this pretext Germany despatched a fleet to seize the fine harbour of Kiao-chau in that province, and demanded that this port should be leased to her, that she should be given valuable mining and railway rights, and that her expenses in occupying Kiao-chau should be paid: the blood of the martyrs was to be the seed of—the Empire. Russia followed by obtaining a lease of Port Arthur—the very position which she had refused to allow Japan to take, on the ground that this would be ruinous to Chinese independence. France demanded the harbour of Kwang-chau in Southern China. Britain, after vainly protesting, took her share in the scramble and obtained a lease of Wei-hai-wei, opposite to Port Arthur, for the purpose of creating a naval base from which to watch the proceedings of the Russians. Even Italy tried to obtain a lease; this was the only one of the European demands which the Chinese Government felt itself strong enough to refuse. It looked as if China was about to be partitioned: already the Great Powers were beginning to talk about 'spheres of influence.'

But the process was checked by the outbreak (1899) of a confused rising against Western interference known as the Boxer Rebellion. Missionaries and Christian converts were murdered. The legations of the European Powers in Peking were besieged (1900). A composite force of several nationalities, including the Japanese, found some difficulty in relieving them. An international punitive expedition, of which Germany insisted that she must appoint the commander, was sent to teach the Chinese to pay proper respect to Europeans; and the Kaiser, figuring himself as the captain of Europe against Asia, designed an enormous allegorical picture of the war against the Yellow Peril. In the end (1901) China of course had to give way; she had

seen her palaces sacked by European troops; she dismissed her anti-Western ministers; she paid a large indemnity; and peace was restored.

Now every obstacle to European exploitation seemed to have broken down. Germany was systematically fortifying Kiao-chau and developing the resources of Shantung; Russia was making Port Arthur impregnable, and securing her grip on Manchuria with railways and garrisons; Japan was looking on in bitterness, longing for revenge against the Muscovite, but afraid to challenge the combined might of Europe; Britain and the United States were protesting futilely against the manifest drift towards partition, but unsupported protests were of no avail.

Then, in 1902, came a diplomatic act which suddenly changed the whole situation. An alliance between Britain and Japan was concluded, and announced to the world. This alliance was of momentous importance. It was Britain's first departure from her traditional policy of avoiding standing alliances. It was the first alliance that had been made in modern times between a European and an Oriental State on equal terms. It definitely brought Japan into the ranks of the Great Powers. And it had the immediate effect of stopping the process of partition in China. The allies pledged themselves to maintain the *status quo* in the Far East; and each undertook to go to the aid of the other in the event of an attack by more than one Power. This was equivalent to a formal announcement to France and Germany that if war should break out between Russia and Japan, the intervention of either of them would bring Britain into the field; and as neither France nor Germany could do anything in the Far East against the opposition of the British fleet, in effect the treaty ensured that, if war should come, Russia and Japan would have to fight their battle alone.

War came within two years; and its results, as we shall see, were far-reaching. If ever a war was inevitable, the Russo-Japanese war deserves that description. Yet it might have been prevented, in one or other of two ways. If the European Powers, including Britain, had agreed to partition China, they could not have been resisted. They did not and could not agree, partly because of their mutual jealousies, partly because Britain held that the partition of an ancient and civilised country such as China was an altogether different thing from the partition of backward and savage Africa. On the other hand, the war could have

been prevented if the English-speaking peoples could have offered a firm and united front in defence of the integrity of China during the last five years of the nineteenth century. But this also was impossible, mainly because the United States made it plain that they would not go beyond diplomatic protests, to which nobody paid any attention.

§ 3. *The Problems of the Balkans: Germany and Turkey.*

While new problems were arising in the Far East, the Near East was also giving constant trouble. It was the danger-point of Europe, whence at any moment a conflagration might start which would involve the civilised world. The unsatisfied national aspirations of the little Balkan States, and the unrest of the Christian territories still subject to Turkish rule, formed one source of disturbance; another was supplied by the subterranean intrigues of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, and by the revival of Mohammedan fanaticism which he encouraged.

The Concert of Europe laboured assiduously but ineffectually to keep these disturbing factors in check. Though the Powers were able to stave off the outbreak of war, except when Greece attacked Turkey in 1897, they were unable to establish any real settlement, or any hope of lasting peace. And the main reason for this failure was that they were disunited. Russia had lost all her influence with the Balkan States, and seemed to have washed her hands of the Balkan imbroglio: when she was urged in 1897 to intervene for the protection of Armenia, she cynically replied that she had no wish to create another Bulgaria—another protégé who would desert and oppose her. France and Britain no longer possessed any influence at Constantinople; they were the conquerors of Moslems, the natural foes of the Mohammedan revival. The European Powers whose influence was now predominant throughout the Balkan Peninsula were Germany and Austria, and these Powers, acting in close accord, could in fact render ineffectual every attempt of the other Powers.

Austrian or German influence reigned in Serbia (until 1903), in Rumania, and in Bulgaria; while Germany was steadily strengthening her influence among the Turks. German officers trained the Turkish army, and led it to victory over the Greeks in 1897. The German Kaiser him-

self paid two state visits to the Sultan, in 1889 and in 1898: they were the first visits that had ever been paid to the Turk by a European sovereign. After his second visit, the Kaiser went on to Damascus and Jerusalem; and in the course of his tour made a speech in which he announced himself as the protector of all the 300,000,000 Mohammedans throughout the world. Most of these were subjects of Britain, France and Russia; and the plain implication of the speech was that Germany was willing to use for political purposes the great religious revival which was stirring the whole Mohammedan world.

More practical results also followed from these friendly relations between Germany and Turkey. Germany obtained the right to build a great railway line from Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf, a project which she began to put into operation in 1902-1903. Its result would be to make German influence all-powerful throughout that vast, rich and neglected region. Already the outlines were emerging of the grandiose project of empire whereby a continuous territory, stretching from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, was to be brought under a single economic régime, and (in effect) under a single political control. This project was the keystone of the lofty imperial dreams which the German people were beginning to entertain. Its foundation was the reigning influence of Germany at Constantinople, and of Austria at Belgrad, Sofia and Bucharest. And the fear of weakening this precarious fabric of power forbade Germany and Austria to act frankly with the other Powers on Balkan questions.

There was, for example, incessant disorder and misgovernment in Macedonia, the unhappy province which the Congress of Berlin had restored to Turkish rule: Bulgars, Serbs and Greeks all had claims to this region, and kept it in unrest by ceaseless raids and intrigues, while the slipshod tyranny of the Turk rather increased than qualified the anarchy. The Powers tinkered with the Macedonian problem, but did no good. There was only one remedy—autonomy; and to that neither Germany nor Austria would have agreed.

Again, there was a rebellion against Turkish misrule in Crete (1896), whose Christian population, led by Venizelos, clamoured to be united with the motherland of Greece. The Powers carried out a pacific blockade of Crete, and eventually established a system of autonomy under a Greek prince, subject to Turkish suzerainty. They could

do so because Crete was an island, easily dealt with by fleets. But their action involved a disregard of Turkish sovereignty; Germany and Austria therefore refused to act with the other Powers. In 1897 Greece plunged into a mad war with Turkey, in the hope of gaining some of the Greek territories withheld from her in 1878, and European volunteers flocked to her aid, almost as in Byron's days. But she was defeated in a thirty days' campaign by a Turkish army under German officers. The Powers succeeded in saving her from the worst results of her indiscretion; but the prestige of Turkey had been re-established.

In 1894 and the following years Mohammedan fanaticism was deliberately stirred up against the Armenian Christians, and an appalling series of massacres took place, not only in Armenia, but even in Constantinople itself, within sight of the European embassies. These outrages were far more prolonged and far more destructive than the Bulgarian atrocities which had awakened the conscience of Europe in 1876. They were encouraged and even directed by Turkish officials, and the worst offender received honour from the Sultan. Yet they produced no result save ineffective protests; even Russia remained inactive. Never before had the Turk ventured to show such cynical indifference to the complaints of Europe. He was evidently conscious of a new strength when he ventured upon such boldness. The massacres were at their worst in 1897 and 1898; and it was in 1898 that the German Kaiser revisited Constantinople as the guest of Abdul Hamid, who was responsible for these crimes; it was in 1898 that he announced that he had taken all Mohammedans under his protection.

It is not surprising that the Concert of Europe could not keep the Turk in order, or find stable solutions for the problems of the Balkans; for the Balkans had now become a sort of appanage of the Triple Alliance. In the next period Balkan troubles were to become more and more acute, until they led to the outbreak of the Great War. Already in 1903 there was a foretaste of the coming difficulties. The young King and Queen of Serbia were brutally murdered by a group of military conspirators. This ugly episode seemed to Western Europe only a proof of the untamed barbarism of the Balkan peoples. It was much more than that. The Serbian monarchs were in effect the agents of Austria for keeping Serbia in subjection to Austrian policy. They were

replaced by a prince of another line, Peter Karageorgevitch, who was the representative of a national and anti-Austrian policy. Austrian ascendancy in the Balkans was threatened by the independent policy which Serbia now began to pursue; and from this moment Serbia was exposed to the unresting enmity of Austria. Eleven years later this situation was to form the immediate cause of the Great War.

§ 4. *The Entente between France and Britain.*

It is plain that Germany, the most formidable military Power in the world, was changing her attitude and her aims in world-politics. She was no longer, in Bismarck's phrase, a 'satiated' Power; she was bent upon becoming a world-Power, and was seeking in every direction for opportunities to augment her dominions. She looked with yearning eyes towards South America, where (especially in Brazil) many German colonists had settled. Here the Monroe Doctrine stood in the way; she would have been glad to challenge it if she could have got the aid of Britain. But wherever she turned, save in Turkey, naval strength seemed to be necessary as a condition of further expansion; and naval strength she did not possess.

Bismarck, indeed, had held that no State could be strong enough to pursue at once military and naval supremacy, and he had been content to leave Germany in the third rank of naval Powers. The new generation, and the Kaiser who was its spokesman, refused to be content with this position. Mahan's books on the influence of sea-power were nowhere more seriously studied than in Germany; and they taught that sea-power was the greatest source of national strength. To make Germany as powerful on the seas as she already was on land became the chief ambition of Wilhelm II.; and during these years he took the first long steps towards this objective. In 1895 the Kiel Canal was opened; by making it easy to transfer fleets from the Baltic to the North Sea, or *vice versa*, it almost doubled the available strength of the German navy. In 1897 the German Navy League was formed, to teach Germans the vital importance of a great fleet. The Kaiser backed its propagandist labours by pointed speeches, in which he asserted that Germany's future lay on the ocean, that the trident must be in her hands, that she must claim the Admiralty of the Atlantic. Britain, who had wielded the trident for three hundred

years, and depended upon it for her very existence, could not listen to these assertions unperturbed. Nor did they remain idle words. In 1898 the Reichstag passed an Act which provided funds for the creation of a powerful navy. In 1900 a second Act doubled the rapidity of construction; and this during the crisis of the South African War, when every German newspaper was full of virulent denunciations of Britain.

Hitherto Britain had been persistently friendly towards Germany; her strongest imperialists, Chamberlain and Rhodes, had even dreamed of an alliance between Britain, America and Germany, which was to dominate and pacify the world; and France had been generally regarded as Britain's most dangerous foe. But the trend of events in European and world-politics, as well as the declared naval ambitions of Germany, produced a change of attitude; and two years after the conclusion of the Boer War an *entente cordiale* was established between France and Britain (1904). Part of the credit for this achievement belongs to the tact of King Edward VII., who created the atmosphere which made reconciliation possible. But the actual diplomatic arrangements were due to Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary who had negotiated the Anglo-Japanese alliance two years earlier; and both agreements were the outcome of the course of events. Neither would have been thinkable ten years earlier.

The *entente* of 1904 was in no sense an alliance. It involved no formal promise of mutual assistance for the future. It merely removed the numerous causes of friction which had kept France and Britain on bad terms in the past; and there was no reason why a similar agreement should not have been made by either party with Germany or with any other Power. Several old-standing disputes, such as that about the Newfoundland fisheries, were healed; but the most important parts of the agreement were that France recognised the position of Britain in Egypt, and promised to raise no further difficulties there, while Britain recognised the special interests of France in the unrestful country of Morocco. At the same time as these agreements, the two countries—who had, during nine centuries, fought one another more often than any other two countries in the world—set a new example to the world by signing an arbitration treaty, whereby they agreed to refer to arbitration every cause of dispute arising between them which did not affect their fundamental interests or their honour.

In essence, then, the *entente* of 1904 was not an alliance, or an understanding aimed at any Power, but a purely pacific agreement, which might have been made at any time, and might to the great advantage of the world have been extended to include every European Power. But in fact it was made at this juncture because both France and Britain felt themselves threatened by a common danger, and were anxious to remove causes of difference. The source of this threat was Germany; and from 1904 onwards, during ten unhappy and distressful years, Britain and France were found continually acting in co-operation to check the ever-growing aggressiveness of Germany and her allies.

§ 5. *The Movement for Peace and the First Hague Conference.*

It is not to be supposed that Europe regarded with indifference or complacency the steadily increasing intensity of international rivalry, the instability of the world's peace, or the lavish expenditure on armaments which was devouring so much of the world's growing wealth, forbidding social amelioration, and making the prospect of war tenfold more hideous than it had ever been. The transformation of Europe into a vast armed camp was regarded by the best men in most countries with a sort of helpless and bewildered exasperation, because it seemed to be in conflict with the natural movement of civilisation. Many well-meaning people were tempted to lay all the blame upon the wilful wickedness of statesmen, drawing no distinction between the statesmen of one country and those of another; many others glibly attributed the evil to capitalism, or to imperialism, or to any other 'ism' which they happened to dislike. Few were content to trace these unhealthy conditions to their manifest and immediate causes—to the example of Germany, which other countries were compelled to follow in self-defence, and to the doctrine, which Bismarck's victories seemed to have established, that brute force is the ultimate determinant in human affairs.

Yet in truth the opposite doctrine—the doctrine that Law, and not Force, ought to regulate the relations of States—was by no means dead, but exercised a growing power. The international spirit, which had been strong at the end of the Napoleonic War, had been strengthened by the developments of the nineteenth century. Improved

communications and growing commerce had brought all the nations into closer relations with one another. The social usages of all the European peoples were being more and more assimilated; from Galway to Athens and from Stockholm to Cadiz men wore clothes of the same style, behaved in much the same way, and were faced by much the same social problems. Science was international, and the dominion of science was growing every day; the work of the great writers of each country was translated into the languages of all the rest, and Ibsen, Tolstoi, Anatole France were read by the intelligent in every land.

Moreover, despite appearances, the international spirit had made itself felt, with progressive force, in the sphere of politics. The Concert of Europe still worked. It might seem an ineffective body, yet it had achieved much; it had maintained peace in Europe for a long time, in face of great difficulties; it had carried out the partition of Africa without actual conflict, a thing which would have been impossible in any earlier age. Despite their mutual jealousies, the European States had learned to take joint action for many purposes. They had a common set of rules for the treatment of the wounded in war, drawn up at Geneva by general agreement; they regulated their postal systems in accord, they had established an international system of copyright, they controlled (for example) the navigation of the Danube through an international commission. More important, the nations were learning to refer their disputes to arbitration, rather than to the more dangerous arbitrament of war. The modern use of arbitration for the settlement of international differences began with a treaty between Britain and the United States in 1794.[1] But it had grown steadily during the nineteenth century. There were eight instances of international arbitration between 1820 and 1840, thirty between 1840 and 1860, forty-four between 1860 and 1880, and ninety between 1880 and 1900. It is worthy of note that Britain had made more use of this method than any other Power; the United States came next; France, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands followed in that order. Many of the questions thus settled were small disputes, which would not in any case have led to war; but some, like the *Alabama* question, or the Venezuela question in 1899, were of much more serious importance. The nations were acquiring the habit of resorting to

[1] See above, p. 267.

judicial rather than military methods of settling their differences. And they were doing so in face of real difficulties; for on each separate question the Governments concerned had first to agree to arbitrate, and then to create a special tribunal for the purpose. Evidently the time had come when some regular method of settling such questions might be arrived at by agreement: the rapid increase in the number of arbitrations showed the need for such an advance.

Thus two hostile conceptions were working at the same time within the mind of the civilised world: on the one hand the pursuit of domination by brute force, on the other the attempt to extend the Reign of Law from the relations between individuals to the relations between States. No greater question lay before Europe and the world than the question which of these conceptions was to triumph. In the last days of the nineteenth century, when the menace of war seemed to be looming in every quarter of the world, an event took place which raised the hopes of those who believed in the substitution of law for force as the controlling factor in international relations. In 1898 the Tsar of Russia sent to the Governments of all the great and most of the small States an eloquent message, in which he urged them to consider the ruin that was being brought upon the world by the intolerable burden of armaments, and invited them to send delegates to a conference which should deliberate upon the means of removing the nightmare, and of finding methods of avoiding war. And in 1899 the representatives of twenty-six nations gathered at The Hague for the first Peace Conference, in response to the Tsar's invitation.

To those who had built glowing hopes upon the summons of The Hague Conference its results were a disappointment. It did nothing for the limitation of armaments; the difficulties were too great, since nothing could be done unless every nation was willing to allow the forces it might maintain to be defined for it; and few of the nations, and Germany least of all, would contemplate submitting to such dictation. Yet it was something that the sentiment of the civilised world should be expressed in an organised way, as it was in the discussions. And one important and valuable achievement stood to the credit of the Conference. It set up a permanent tribunal, a panel of arbitrators, from among whom nations willing to resort to arbitration might select; and it defined the modes in which international

arbitrations should be conducted. The existence of this system did much to encourage the next great step forward, when Britain and France adopted in 1904 a general arbitration treaty, whereby they agreed to refer all controversies between them, not affecting their national honour or vital interests, to this mode of settlement. How plainly the sentiment of humanity was setting in this direction was shown by the fact that in the four years following the Franco-British treaty of 1904 no less than sixty treaties of the same type were signed by various Powers. The world, or the major part of the world, wanted organised peace and preferred law to brute force.

§ 6. *The Russo-Japanese War.*

But assuredly the era of peace had not arrived. In the very year of The Hague Conference the war in South Africa began ; and for a time it even seemed likely that a general war would grow out of it. And two years after the close of the South African War came a still more desperate conflict—the war between Russia and Japan (1904), which would almost certainly have involved Europe if the Anglo-Japanese treaty had not held the ring for the combatants.

The outcome of this titanic conflict startled the world, and changed the aspect of world-politics. Little Japan, by heroic sacrifices and efforts, defeated the Russian colossus both on sea and on land ; and securely established her position among the Great Powers. All over Asia this victory of an Oriental over a European Power had profound reactions. It caused a rapid decline in the prestige of Europe, it stimulated nationalist and anti-Western movements in India and elsewhere, and its influence in this regard is still potent. In European politics the effects of the Russian *débâcle* were still deeper ; and they were increased by the outbreak of revolution in Russia, which for a time reduced her to impotence. Russia's strength had long been over-estimated ; now, for a time, it was under-estimated. Germany and Austria felt that they could proceed to bolder action in the Balkans and elsewhere without fear. France felt that the ally to whom she had pinned her hopes, and on whom she had lavished her thrifty savings, could no longer be trusted to protect her ; she became the more eager to cultivate her new friendship with Britain. And Britain herself had no longer any reason to dread Russia as a menace to the safety of India. The way

was prepared for a new orientation of world-polity, which came about during the next decade, and ended in the Great War.

[Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations*; Débidour, *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe, 1878-1904*; Seignobos, *Political History of Contemporary Europe*; Hazen, *Europe since 1815*; Muir, *Nationalism and Internationalism, The Expansion of Europe*, and *National Self-Government*; Forbes and others, *The Balkans*; Miller, *The Balkans*; Beazley and others, *History of Russia*; Temperley, *History of Serbia*; Higgins, *Hague Peace Conferences*; Scott, *Hague Peace Conferences*.]

BOOK XII

AN EPILOGUE: THE ORDEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH

(A.D. 1905-1919)

INTRODUCTION

We have come to the last stage of our long story, the fourteen years from 1905 to 1919; and it is the most difficult stage to narrate clearly. If it were to be treated with a fulness proportionate to the magnitude of the events with which it was filled, or to the influence which these events must exercise upon the future development of the Commonwealth, not a single Book but a volume would be required. But the time has not yet come when a balanced and judicial account of these world-shaking events is possible. Many facts vital to a sound judgment are still undisclosed; our thoughts and our emotions have been so deeply stirred that we cannot yet look back calmly upon these events; what is more, though we know that their consequences must be of infinite moment, no man can yet venture to say what they will be, and it is all but impossible to avoid laying emphasis upon the wrong facts. We shall be wise, therefore, to content ourselves with a very broad survey, a sort of provisional and tentative epilogue to our main narrative.

As we look back across the gulf that was made by the war, two inconsistent views of the years which preceded it compete for mastery in our minds. On the one hand, we often think of the pre-war years as a time of ease and general well-being. They were not so; they were a time of world-wide unrest and discontent; and even if the war had not come, it was evident that civilisation was entering upon a period of upheaval and reconstruction. On the other hand, we sometimes regard these years as having been wholly dominated by the shadow of the coming storm. This also is a false impression. Despite the almost yearly international crises which occurred between 1905 and 1914, most men were little preoccupied by the menace of war; they took these crises lightly, because they had become accustomed to them, and when the catastrophe came it found them incredulous and bewildered. Even those who were most aware of the danger were largely engrossed in other interests. It was

a time of very rapid material advance: motor-transport, the multiform applications of electricity, the conquest of the air, wireless telegraphy, and the rapid development of the resources of the tropics, seemed to be bringing about a new expansion of productive industry, almost as remarkable as the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century; and trade was booming in all the more progressive countries, and very notably in the British realms. But it was also a time of social upheaval, and of clamorous demand for far-reaching social change. The habit of obedience to law was being undermined; there was an ominous readiness to resort to violence or to the defiance of law, even in orderly Britain; for this was the period of the 'passive resisters,' of the 'suffragettes,' of the embattled volunteers in Ireland, and of the first steps towards the use of Direct Action in the industrial sphere: minorities were striving to impose their will by lawless action. In some countries there were revolutions or threats of revolution; in many countries there were gigantic strikes on a scale previously unexampled—strikes aimed not at employers only, but at the community; and in some countries, notably in Britain, there were bold proposals of political and social change which led to acute controversy. Finally, there were ominous signs of a revolt against Western ascendancy in the Oriental countries, notably in India and Egypt.

All these difficulties would have made the early years of the twentieth century a period of profound significance and importance, even if there had been no international crises and no menace of war. That looming danger unquestionably intensified and exacerbated the difficulties of the time, especially in the European countries, which felt it most. It made the East distrustful of the West. It necessitated a reserve and even a secrecy in the conduct of public affairs which undermined the confidence of democratic peoples in their Governments. It brought about a lavish expenditure on armaments which placed obstacles in the way of social reform. So long as this dark cloud hung over Europe, 'the world was not safe for democracy.' But although the war-menace doubled the unrest of the time, it was by no means its only or its principal cause. Nor was the story of these years wholly a story of unrest; it was a time of substantial achievement in many fields.

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH ON THE EVE OF THE CATACLYSM

§ 1. *Growing Imperial Unity: the Imperial Conferences.*

THE outstanding feature of the history of the British Commonwealth during the early years of the twentieth century was that the great Dominions, now fully autonomous in all their internal affairs, and having attained the status of free nations, were showing a great eagerness to draw more closely to one another and to the motherland. This desire found expression in many vague projects for the creation of new imperial ties, some of which were debated in Imperial Conferences; and in the years just before the war there was a revival of the old project of a formal imperial federation, stimulated especially by a group of able young men, who called themselves the Round Table, published an excellent review to advocate their views, and started corresponding groups in many parts of the Empire. Nothing came, or could come, of these more formal schemes; they were incompatible with the autonomous nationhood which every one of the Dominions cherished, and they could not find a suitable place for India. It was by more informal and elastic methods that the growing unity and co-operation of these years expressed itself; and most notably by the working of the Imperial Conferences.

The first three Colonial Conferences of 1887, 1897 and 1902 had been almost accidental conclaves, held in connexion with great ceremonial occasions, the two jubilees of Queen Victoria and the coronation of King Edward VII. The Imperial Conferences of 1907 and 1911 were specially summoned, and it was agreed in 1907 that they should be regularly held at intervals of four years. They were equipped with a permanent secretariat, and with elaborate agenda; they were presided over, not by the Colonial Secretary, but by the British Prime Minister; and their

proceedings were recorded, and discussed in all the Parliaments of the Empire. What is more, they dealt with matters of pith and moment, and their deliberations led to very important action.

In 1907 the problems of imperial defence were discussed with a fulness never before attempted, and in conjunction with the experts of the Imperial Defence Committee. The Conference recommended the establishment of an Imperial General Staff, with branches in all the Dominions working in close contact with one another; it emphasised the importance of ensuring that uniform methods of organisation and equipment should be followed in the military forces of all the Dominions, so as to make co-operation easy in case of need; and in order to work out fully these highly important suggestions, a subsidiary Defence Conference was held in the next year, 1908. Out of these discussions sprang the defence programmes which the Dominions undertook in 1909 and 1910; and these measures prepared the way for their easy military co-operation with the mother-country in the Great War, which was to save the Commonwealth and the world. In the Conference of 1911 the statesmen of the Dominions were admitted to the fullest knowledge of the arcana of foreign affairs, and took part in an intimate discussion of British policy at a moment when, as we shall see, the European outlook was very dangerous. When the catastrophe came, the responsible leaders of the Dominions knew how it had come, and knew that they had not been led into it blindfold. In no small degree the whole-hearted comradeship of all the members of the Commonwealth, which was among the most glorious features of the war, was due to the growing intimacy of co-operation that had been achieved during the ten years preceding the war.

It was not only with defence and foreign policy that the Conferences dealt, though their contribution to the discussion of these problems was their greatest achievement. They discussed also many other modes of common action. Thus a special subsidiary conference in 1910 led to the adoption of a uniform practice in regard to copyright; the Conference of 1911 found a mode of admitting naturalised foreigners to the rights of citizenship throughout the Empire; and there was much valuable discussion, both in 1907 and in 1911, on commercial questions, on imperial communications, on the organisation of the imperial courts of appeal, and on many other themes.

Other conferences of a less august kind, which were summoned during these years, contributed in an equal degree to bring home to the citizens of the Commonwealth a sense of their fellowship in a noble communion of free peoples; such were a conference of universities, a conference of teachers, a conference of journalists.

In short, the character of the British Commonwealth of Nations was getting itself defined in forms which would have delighted the prophetic soul of Burke, and which fulfilled the dreams of Durham. Unlike any other human society that had ever existed on the earth, it was displaying itself as one State and many States at the same time: one State under a single crown, with a single citizenship, a single ultimate appeal at law, offering a common front to all enemies, and providing for common military action under a single command in case of need; but at the same time many States, each having unrestricted control over its own destinies, and each co-operating with the rest, in the last resort, only because it shared the same traditions and the same ideals. This was a type of human comradeship unexemplified in human history. It offered to an unrestful world a model of what could be achieved in equal comradeship when jealousy and mutual suspicion were banished.

§ 2. *The Union of South Africa, and the Prosperity of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.*

But even more remarkable than the development of imperial unity was the unification of South Africa, the region of the Commonwealth wherein conflict had been most frequent, and friction most bitter, for seventy years. After the close of the South African War in 1902, the High Commissioner, Lord Milner, with a brilliant band of helpers, spent three years in the reconstruction of the two annexed republics, which had been disorganised by three years of fighting. At the beginning of 1905 the time seemed ripe for the establishment of a system of representative government, such as had been promised when peace was made, and draft constitutions were promulgated for the two conquered colonies. It was proposed to concede representative but not responsible government; even this might appear courageous only three years after the conclusion of a bitterly-contested war. But before the proposal could be brought into effect, a Liberal Government had come into power in Britain, under Sir Henry Campbell-

Bannerman; and, with splendid faith in the virtues of self-government, it was decided to take the bold step of establishing a fully responsible system in the Transvaal at once (December 1906).

The courage and magnanimity of this step, taken only four years after the war, surpassed even the gift of self-government to Canada after the rebellion of 1837. But it brought its own immediate and great reward. Though the first election (1907) gave a majority to the Dutch in both of the conquered colonies, and though a Dutch majority was simultaneously returned in the Cape Parliament, there was no attempt to revive the exclusive racial policy of Kruger. On the contrary, the first result of the change was the rise of a spontaneous demand among both British and Dutch for the unification of all South Africa, an end towards which Grey and Frere, Carnarvon and Gladstone, had striven in vain. In 1908 a National Convention, consisting of Dutch and British delegates from all the four States, met at Durban to work out a scheme of union; and for the first time for seventy years the two white peoples of South Africa were found co-operating in harmony for the common advantage. The scheme which they drafted went beyond federation; it established a single unitary State, governed by a single cabinet and Parliament; the colonies, now renamed provinces, retaining only provincial councils with limited powers which are entirely subject to the central Parliament. Thus the most divided region of the British Commonwealth, left free to choose, adopted a more completely unified form of government than either Canada or Australia; and modelled its institutions as closely as might be upon those of the mother-country. The new constitution, approved by the four Parliaments, was ratified by the Imperial Parliament in 1909; and in 1910 South Africa, after all its troubles, entered upon its history as a united State under the British Crown.

There could not have been a braver or a more convincing demonstration of the sincerity of the British trust in political freedom; and the demonstration was completed when the Governor-General, Lord Gladstone, entrusted the task of forming the first ministry to the Transvaal Dutchman, Louis Botha, who had been Commander-in-Chief of the Boer armies. Four years later the ordeal of the Great War was to prove that in this case, as in so many others, freedom was the strongest foundation of com-

radeship. It seemed that the medicine of liberty had cured one of the greatest difficulties by which the modern Commonwealth had been hampered.

But the original difficulty, from which all the long troubles had arisen, still survived—the difference of view upon the treatment of the native population. During the discussions on the constitution, Cape Colony had striven to persuade the other States to adopt her method of allowing the franchise to coloured people on an educational qualification; she had failed to do more than maintain her practice within her own borders, and this denial of civic rights to the native population was the one feature of the constitution which aroused adverse comment in the Imperial Parliament. Yet the difficulty was no longer so acute as it had been in the days when the memory of slavery was still fresh; the Union Government was not unaware of its responsibilities; and General Smuts has told us that in dealing with the problem of native government, and in recognising, as it does, the right of the native population to special measures of protection, South Africa has learnt much from the past experiments of the British Government.

The racial problem was also presenting itself, however, in a new and more difficult form during these years. Many thousands of Indians had found their way into Natal and the Transvaal. Resolved to prevent the accentuation of its already complex racial problems, the Union Government set itself from the first to restrict Indian immigration, and imposed upon the existing Indian settlers a strict form of registration which they regarded as humiliating. The Indians claimed equal rights as British subjects; their cause was taken up by a remarkable agitator, M. K. Gandhi, who has since made himself the leader of a formidable movement in India; and throughout the pre-war period there was constant trouble on the subject, which was discussed at the Imperial Conference in 1911. It is, indeed, a very difficult imperial problem, which arises also, though in a less acute form, in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the West Indies and East Africa. The Dominions have an undeniable right to determine the character of the immigration which they will permit; but the policy which they have followed has certainly helped to embitter the Indian Nationalist movement to which we shall have to refer later.

Of the other great Dominions little need be said in so

brief a survey as we are here attempting. During the decade preceding the war Canada, Australia and New Zealand were all enjoying a high tide of prosperity; and in all three the flood of immigration from the home country had reached a much higher level than in the previous period. It is significant of the growing unity of the Empire that, while in 1900 only 30 per cent. of the emigrants from Britain went to the British Dominions, by 1911 the percentage had risen to 80. In other words, the surplus population of the crowded homeland had almost ceased to go to the United States or to other lands, and was finding its way almost wholly to the British realms, at the rate of about 250,000 per annum.

Most of this tide of emigration flowed, during these years, into Canada; she was prospering as she had never prospered before, for the rich corn lands of the West were being opened out, thanks to an exuberant energy in the construction of railways. When one reflects upon the wealth and population of Alberta and Saskatchewan, now the greatest granaries of the Empire, it is difficult to realise that they were only admitted as provinces of the Dominion so recently as 1905. Immigrants were flocking into Canada, before the war, at the rate of two or three hundred thousand a year. Nearly half of these newcomers came from the United States. The relations between Canada and the United States were thus becoming increasingly intimate; and in 1910 and 1911 Laurier's Liberal Government in Canada revived the old project of a treaty of reciprocity with the States. But this revived the old fears of subordination to the great republic, all the more because some American politicians indiscreetly boasted that the result would be annexation. The boast aroused fears in Canada for her two dearest ideals, her own free nationhood and her membership of the British Commonwealth. And the result was that in 1911 Laurier's long-lived ministry came to an end, and was replaced by a Conservative Government, under Sir Robert Borden. Its most distinctive undertaking was the project of a navy, which was to be built and administered in consultation with the British Admiralty, and to be worked in conjunction with the Royal Navy in time of war. The project had not been carried into effect when the Great War broke out. But, taken in conjunction with the military reorganisation which was carried out after the Conferences of 1907 and 1908, it was a proof of the reality of imperial co-operation.

In Australia and New Zealand these years saw a prosperity only less marked than that of Canada, and a renewal of the tide of British immigration, which had been almost suspended during the previous period. Both countries had adopted the fixed resolution to maintain the purity of their race, and jealously excluded Asiatic immigrants: the catchword 'White Australia' represented a principle from which no minister or party would have dared to depart. Both also had adopted, with variations, the policy which has been called 'the new protection'—a policy of combining tariff-protection for the employer with price-regulation for the consumer and the control of wages for the workman. It is a policy more easy to conceive than to execute, but Australia is convinced that it is practicable. Both countries were afflicted, especially during the later years of the period, by labour-troubles, which their bold devices of arbitration and conciliation did not avail to prevent. Australia presented in these years, both in the Commonwealth and in the States, the first examples of purely Labour Governments directing great affairs, and carrying out far-reaching projects of social reconstruction which space does not permit us to analyse. But the Labour Governments were as resolute as their rivals to maintain and strengthen the ties which bound Australia to the Commonwealth; in the Imperial Conferences Australia was only surpassed by New Zealand in the zeal with which she advocated methods of strengthening the imperial ties. And—perhaps because of their remoteness and the extent to which they were exposed to the possibility of foreign attack—both Australia and New Zealand surpassed the other Dominions in the zeal with which they threw themselves into projects of defence, in accordance with the general principles laid down by the Imperial Conference. Both adopted universal military training; both invited Lord Kitchener, in 1909-10, to visit them and advise them on military organisation. Australia created her own navy, with the proviso that it should be at the disposal of the Admiralty in time of war, and offered Dreadnoughts to the mother-country during the naval alarm of 1909; New Zealand also offered to pay for a Dreadnought, and made large annual contributions towards the fleet. There was no shadow of doubt that these distant lands valued the loyalty of the Commonwealth as they valued their own free nationhood, and took no mean view of their responsibilities.

§ 3. *The Nationalist Movements in Egypt and India.*

We turn from the self-governing Dominions to Egypt and India; and here a very different story has to be told: a story of unrest, of clamorous demands for enlarged political privileges, and of sedulously fostered race-hatred. The East was beginning to revolt against the ascendancy of the West, and to deny or minimise the value of what the West had given it.

After nearly a quarter of a century of inestimable service, Lord Cromer ceased to be the British agent in Egypt in 1907. His retirement may be said to end the period of reconstruction; and it almost synchronised with the beginning of a period of vehement nationalist agitation, which had for its declared object the extrusion of British influence from the country, and the establishment of a system of parliamentary government. There had long been an under-current of discontent and opposition among the once dominant classes of Turks and Arabs, who had misruled Egypt in the period before the British occupation. But the movement became overt, and began to extend itself to the peasantry, in 1906, when a group of British officers, having shot some pigeons in the village of Denshawai without obtaining leave from the village headman, were attacked by a mob; one of them was killed, while another was seriously wounded. The extreme severity with which this riot was punished formed the text for a press-campaign of invective against British tyranny, and of demands for Egyptian freedom. Some part of the impetus to this campaign came from the Mohammedan revival, of which we have elsewhere said something;[1] and the troubles of Morocco, the Italian war with Turkey in 1911, and the Balkan War of 1912, kept Moslem agitation at fever-heat: the whole Moslem world was falling into a ferment of anti-European feeling. But alongside of this was a genuine resentment of foreign domination, and a demand for the institutions of self-government: when in 1908 even Turkey set up a parliamentary system, Egyptians felt that they were being left far behind. In Egypt the Khedive and his ministers nominally had full legislative as well as executive power, but they notoriously had to do as they were bidden by their British advisers: there were, indeed, a partly-elected Legislative Council, and a General Assembly, but these

[1] Above, Bk. XI. chap. i. p. 614.

were negligible bodies, having only advisory powers. The agitation was persistent and vehement between 1906 and 1911 ; it even took to assassination ; the Prime Minister, Boutros Pasha, was murdered in 1910. From 1911 to 1914, when Lord Kitchener was British Agent, the agitation quietened under his firm and suave handling. But it was by no means dead ; and its leaders, inspired by Moslem sentiment, looked for support to Turkey, and to Turkey's patron, Germany.

Far more serious than the Egyptian agitation was the turmoil into which India was plunged during these years. We have earlier seen [1] how the Nationalist movement had gradually gained strength during the later years of the nineteenth century. It now began to assume a violent and a dangerous form, stimulated especially by the spectacle of the Japanese victory over Russia. An Eastern people had proved themselves the superiors of a Western empire : why should not India take a lesson from Japan, and achieve her own national freedom ? And the attitude of the self-governing Dominions towards Indian immigrants intensified the resentment against Western supremacy. As yet these ideas affected only the educated classes, a minute proportion of the vast population of India, the great mass of whom took no interest in politics ; but the educated classes were the vocal classes, controlling the press, the schools, the law-courts and the local governing bodies. There was, indeed, a large body of moderate opinion which recognised that among the innumerable heterogeneous races, religions and castes of India, the first need was the maintenance of peace and justice, which the British system had secured ; and that progress towards self-government must be gradual, and could only be healthy if it went hand-in-hand with steady social and educational advance. This conservative element at first included almost the whole of the Mohammedan community, led (till his death in 1898) by Sir Sayyid Ahmad, and afterwards by the Aga Khan. But a multitude of eager and excitable voices, mainly Hindu, clamoured for the immediate endowment of India with the full rights of self-government enjoyed by Canada and Australia ; and many among them used the press and the platform to preach race-hatred against the British rulers, who were made responsible for every ill from which India suffered.

The immediate occasion for the outburst of violent

[1] Bk. XI. chap. v. p. 668.

agitation was what was known as the Partition of Bengal (1905): a division of that immense province into two parts, for the sake of administrative efficiency, which Lord Curzon had carried out shortly before his retirement. The new arrangement was welcomed by the Mohammedans, who formed an overwhelming majority in the new province of Eastern Bengal; it was denounced by the Hindus as an outrage to the national sentiment of Bengal, and as a device to weaken the most progressive of the provinces. An attempt was made to organise a boycott of British goods, and to persuade Indian purchasers to buy only Indian products; but this *swadeshi* movement, as it was called, soon broke down. More serious was the organisation of a secret campaign of outrage and assassination, whose recruits were mainly drawn from among college students and schoolboys in Bengal. In 1908 two English ladies were murdered by a bomb; and from that time the campaign of outrage went on steadily—being mainly directed against Indian police officers, but including also witnesses who gave evidence against the murderers, and innocent Indians whose money was needed for the manufacture of bombs and the purchase of pistols. Though the murders were not very numerous, the terror they created was such that the ordinary machinery of justice began to break down: even eye-witnesses of crimes dared not give evidence. This conspiracy of outrage was still going on in Bengal when the war began. But it was not confined to Bengal. In the Bombay Presidency, the inflammatory writings of B. G. Tilak were creating a dangerous ferment. And in 1907 there was a dangerous movement in the Punjab—the province from which the army is mainly recruited; it is probable that a serious outbreak was only averted by the sudden deportation of two leading agitators, who had been striving to undermine the loyalty of the troops.

The Liberal Government in Britain resolved to meet this dangerous agitation by granting the largest advance towards self-government that seemed to be practicable in the conditions of India. In 1909 Lord Morley, after long consultations with the Viceroy, Lord Minto, introduced changes which profoundly modified the Indian system of government. A substantial representative element (though not a majority) was introduced into the Imperial Legislative Council; an elected Indian majority was brought into the Provincial Legislative Councils, which

were given power to discuss legislation and finance, though not to control or dismiss the Executive Government; an Indian member was added to the Viceroy's Executive Council, and other Indian members to the Executive Councils in the provinces; while two Indian members were appointed to the Indian Secretary's Council in London. These changes did not introduce, and were not intended to introduce, responsible government on the colonial model into India; Lord Morley very clearly explained that such a step seemed to him to be impossible in the conditions of India, and likely to remain impossible until these conditions were profoundly changed. They were intended to ensure that the influence of Indian opinion should be fully and continuously felt in the Government of India.

But the Morley-Minto reforms, though they were at first welcomed, did not satisfy the more eager reformers. Perhaps they even heightened the discontent; for the members of the Legislative Councils, having no responsibility, mainly confined themselves to negative and hostile criticism of the action of Government, and this gave a new authority to the incessant attacks of the Press. The more advanced reformers continued to press for full self-government. And in 1913 the Hindu advocates of this change were joined by many of the Mohammedans, who had hitherto stood aloof from the agitation. The Islamic revival had begun to stir the Indian Moslems. They were deeply moved by the successive blows which were struck at the power of Turkey during the years immediately preceding the war; they had begun to look to the Sultan of Turkey as the head of their faith, though in earlier days the claim of the Sultan to the Khalifate or headship of Islam had aroused no enthusiasm among Indian Moslems. And this religious emotion was beginning to drive them into hostility to the British Government, now that it had departed from its old friendship with the Turk. The Mohammedans were not united in this attitude; but their more aggressive leaders had begun to join hands with the Hindus in demanding self-government, and the Moslem League, once a conservative, was tending to become a revolutionary organisation.

In 1911 King George V. visited India, and formally ascended the Imperial throne at Delhi. This was the first visit of a reigning British sovereign to the Indian Empire. It made a profound impression, and for a time greatly eased the tension; all the more so because the occasion

was seized to rearrange the administrative divisions of Bengal in a way which made a real concession to Bengali sentiment. But though India had again attained a condition of calm in 1914, the agitation for full self-government was still active in the National Congress and in the Press; the anarchist movement was still afoot in Bengal; and away in Paris, in Berlin, in America, there were knots of impassioned Indian agitators tirelessly preaching the wrongs of India and the tyranny of the British *raj*, and helping to keep the Nationalist movement active by pamphlets, which they sent to Indian colleges: pamphlets which had to be written in English, because that was the only language which would be generally intelligible among the divided peoples of India. Perhaps it was not a wholly unreasonable expectation that, in the event of war, India would rise in revolt against her oppressors. Certainly this was one of the calculations which made the Great War seem more easy and inviting to those who launched it. It was a calculation which forgot that these agitations, important as they were, were no more than a ruffling of waves upon the surface of an ocean: the real heart of India was as yet little affected by them.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL CONTROVERSY IN BRITAIN

§ 1. *The New Era of* 1906.

From the more distant members of the Commonwealth we turn to the motherland, still the heart and centre of the whole, still the home of more than four-fifths of its English-speaking inhabitants. On the eve of the fourth and the most terrible of the struggles for existence in which the British Commonwealth has been engaged during the modern era, it was still as true as it ever had been that the welfare of the whole depended upon the strength, vigour and social health of Britain.

The dominant fact of the pre-war period in British history was the general election of 1906, which brought to an end the twenty years' ascendancy of the Conservatives, and established a revivified Liberal party in power, with an unprecedented majority. The Liberals in this Parliament outnumbered all other parties in combination; but the Government was also able generally to reckon upon the support of 83 Irish Nationalists, and of 51 Labour members, giving them an unwieldy majority of over 300. The election of so large a number of Labour members was perhaps the most impressive feature of this Parliament, the clearest token that British politics were entering upon a new era. The democratic age had genuinely begun.

In the history of British parliamentary politics there had never been so complete and so sudden a reversal of fortune as this election represented: even when allowance has been made for the fact that the balance of parties in Parliament did not truly represent the balance of opinion in the country, it was evident that there had been a real change in the national mind. In part this was due to an emphatic repudiation of Chamberlain's demand for 'Tariff Reform'—Britain was still unmistakably loyal to Free Trade. But behind this lay a deeper feeling, which

was loosely expressed in the common phrase that Britain had rejected Imperialism. The phrase was worse than misleading if it meant that the British people had become indifferent to the fortunes of the Commonwealth as a whole: as the Imperial Conferences showed, this was far indeed from being the case. But the centre of interest had swung back from foreign adventures and territorial acquisitions to the problems of domestic reform: the Parliament of 1906, and the electors who returned it, wanted to be quit of foreign entanglements, and to devote the strength of the nation to the task of social reorganisation.

As we shall see, Fate would not permit this. Like the Government of 1880,[1] the Government of 1905 was forced, despite itself, to give its most anxious attention to the very dangerous international situation which was maturing during these years; it had to reorganise the army, to find vast sums for the navy, to thread its way through thorny international complications whose details could not be made public. This fact alienated many of its most ardent supporters, who resented the inevitable reserve with which foreign difficulties had to be handled, and were impatient that wealth which might have been used for social reforms was being expended on armaments. On the other hand, the growing public realisation of the international peril, and a suspicion that Government was not giving its whole heart to the task of guarding against this peril, largely accounted for the remarkable decline in the strength of the Liberals, which resulted from the elections of 1910. The foreign situation (which we shall consider in the next chapter) thus greatly intensified the difficulty of those enterprises of social reconstruction which eager reformers were burning to undertake. The world was not yet safe for democracy.

Nevertheless this ministry succeeded in achieving an enormous amount of legislative work. Under the premiership first of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and then (from April 1908) of Mr. H. H. Asquith, it introduced a body of social reforms of a more sweeping character than anything which British history had yet seen; it assumed on behalf of the community obligations in regard to the welfare of the mass of the people which the Liberals of the mid-nineteenth century would have regarded with profound alarm; and alongside of these changes it was

[1] Above, Bk. XI. chap. iii. p. 640.

responsible for great measures of political reconstruction. Its proposals, drastic beyond precedent, aroused an intensity of political controversy which had been unknown since the days of the first Home Rule struggle; and when the war broke in upon these discussions, party acrimony, class-bitterness, and national feeling had been stirred to such a pitch that the enemy might well calculate upon finding the power of Britain reduced to impotence. The calculation was utterly at fault. At the first clang of the war-tocsin all the strife was stilled as if by magic; and the nation, like the Commonwealth as a whole, realised with a sort of solemn pride that beneath all these differences it was one.

The eight years of this ministry's existence before the war were divided into two clearly marked parts by the elections of 1910, and the vehement controversy over the budget of 1909 from which they resulted: after 1910 the conflict was yet more intense and bitter than before. And this division of the home controversy corresponds, as we shall see, to an equally clearly marked division of the international problem: after 1910, while British controversies were becoming more intense, the set of European events towards the catastrophe of 1914 was becoming more ominous. In this chapter it is our business to describe in outline the social and political changes that were afoot in Britain, and the conflicts which arose from them; disregarding for the moment the deepening international danger which added to their intensity, and strained the nerves of those who took part in them.

§ 2. *Legislative Activity*, 1906-1910.

There were some political controversies of old standing with which the new Government was bound to deal. The greatest of these, the question of Irish Home Rule, was indeed, by agreement, withheld from discussion during the Parliament of 1906, and did not emerge again until after the elections of 1910. But an unsuccessful attempt was made to extend Irish autonomy by an Irish Councils Bill; the Irish University problem, which Gladstone had unsuccessfully tackled in 1871, was solved by a useful measure of 1908, which set up new universities in Belfast for the Protestants and in Dublin for the Catholics; three unsuccessful attempts were made to deal with the problem of religious education which had been raised by the Act

of 1902; Welsh disestablishment was proposed in 1909, only to be rejected by the House of Lords; and there was a serious endeavour to deal with the long-vexed question of the licensing of public-houses on the basis of local option: it was summarily rejected by the House of Lords, but at a later date (1913) a measure granting Local Option to Scotland was forced through. On the whole, these old problems and controversies remained unsettled; but the way in which some of them had been treated by the House of Lords, in face of the overwhelming majorities with which they had been carried in the Commons, added strength to the demand for a restriction of the power of the Lords, which reached its culmination in 1909.

Again, it was necessary to deal with the legal position of the Trade Unions, which had been seriously impaired by a legal judgment (Taff Vale) that had made Trade Unions liable at law for the actions of their members during industrial disputes. Government introduced a Bill which would exempt the Trade Unions from liability for any act not done under their own direct authority. On the demand of the Labour members this qualification was removed; the House of Lords did not venture to touch the Act; and the Trade Unions were thus endowed with immensely enlarged powers, and freed from any fear of being called to account in the courts even for their own actions in industrial disputes. They thus became privileged bodies. It may be convenient here to touch upon another Trade Union problem which arose later, and which belongs more properly to the second period of this ministry's history. The new Labour party depended for its resources upon a levy collected by the Trade Unions from their members. In 1909 a judgment of the courts in effect made it possible for a member of a Trade Union to restrain his Union from levying funds for political purposes; and the decision seemed likely to destroy the very foundations of the Labour party's organisation. In 1912 an Act was passed to meet the difficulty: it legalised any political levy authorised by a vote of a majority of the members of a Union, but empowered any member to claim exemption if he had the courage to do so. This Act legalised the political action of the Trade Unions; and the two Acts taken together formed the foundations of the industrial and political power which the Trade Unions subsequently exercised, and turned them into one of the strongest forces in the State. Meanwhile, in 1911, the position of work-

ing-men members of Parliament had been greatly eased by the introduction of payment of members—a political change of the first moment, which was nevertheless adopted with extraordinary quietness.

Alongside of these measures were a number of others which would have excited great attention in a less active Parliament: the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal; the enactment of a drastic measure against certain modes of commercial corruption; the bringing of the whole London Dock estate under the control of a public authority; the institution of a Public Trustee. All these were valuable reforms. But they faded into insignificance over against the code of social legislation which was introduced during these years.

First place belongs to a remarkable series of measures aimed at general social well-being. In 1908 the project of Old Age Pensions, long talked about, was carried into effect on a non-contributory basis: every resourceless person over seventy years of age was given a pension of 5s. a week at the cost of the State. Childhood as well as age was brought under communal care: by the Provision of Meals Act (1906) education authorities were empowered to feed children who came to school hungry; by the Medical Inspection Act (1907), all the children of the nation were brought under medical supervision; while by the Children's Bill (1908) many forms of protection for children were enacted, and, in particular, a special system of jurisdiction was instituted for juvenile criminals. Even more beneficent than these measures—in potentiality at any rate—was the Housing and Town-planning Act of 1909, which endowed local authorities with large powers for the demolition of insanitary, and the construction of healthy, houses for the people; and which also made a new departure in British usage by imposing upon urban authorities the duty of working out a sound plan for their towns, and of seeing to their systematic and orderly development.

A second group of measures related to the organisation of industry and the conditions of industrial labour. For the first time, under an Act of 1906, a Census of Production was carried out, giving the basis for scientific study of these problems. Coal-miners got an eight-hours' day (1908). The conditions under which shop-assistants had to carry on their work were defined and regulated (1910). A Workmen's Compensation Act (1906) extended to all trades the principles which had been applied

to a limited number of trades in 1897. A momentous departure was taken in 1909 when, by the Sweated Industries Act, the regulation of wages and conditions of work in certain badly paid industries wherein Trade Union action was difficult, was entrusted to Trade Boards, consisting of representatives of employers and workmen with certain additional members appointed by the Board of Trade. The awards of these bodies, when adopted by the Board of Trade, became legally enforcible. This represented the most complete reversal of the policy of industrial *laisser faire* that Britain had yet witnessed; and in another respect also it marked the beginning of a new departure in industrial organisation—the organised and enforced co-operation of employers and employed in the definition of industrial conditions, under the authority and supervision of the State. Finally, in 1909, a whole network of Labour Exchanges was set up in every part of the country, with a view to facilitating the organisation of the labour-market, and as a preparation for dealing with the immense problem of unemployment which the Government next proposed to attack.

A third group of measures were concerned with agriculture and the land, and represented the most serious attempt which had yet been made to bring hope and enterprise once more into the life of the British peasantry. The Small Holdings Act of 1907 imposed upon County Councils the duty of providing small agricultural holdings for those who desired them, and endowed the Councils with substantial powers for the compulsory purchase of land for this purpose. This Act led to a rapid increase in the number of small holdings and allotments; but many other reforms were necessary ere a real revival of prosperity among a rural peasantry could be effected. The land problem also raised the question of the valuation of land, and the notorious fact that the purchase-price of land required for public purposes was generally found to be many times greater than was represented by the rates which its owner paid for public services. This problem was first raised as early as 1907, in the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, which proposed to introduce the practice, already adopted in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, of levying rates on the value of the land apart from the buildings it carried. The proposal aroused a fierce controversy, which prepared the way for the more violent storm raised by the land-tax proposals in the Budget of 1909.

All these many-sided measures represented a very great enlargement of the functions of the State and of public authorities. Some of them necessitated the appointment of great numbers of officials. The number of public officials and the extent of their interference in the affairs of individuals had, as we have seen, been steadily growing ever since 1832; but this sudden increase raised, especially in the years after 1910, an outcry about bureaucracy. This great series of measures of social reconstruction also necessarily involved an immense outlay of public money, and brought about large changes in the methods of public finance. There was, in truth, no sphere of public affairs in which the spirit of the new democracy was more patently displayed; and it was ultimately upon finance that the bitterest controversy was to turn. The budgets for which Mr. Asquith was responsible as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1906, 1907, 1908), besides redeeming much of the debt which had been accumulated during the South African War, reduced the cost of some articles of universal consumption, and at the same time prepared to meet the cost of Old Age Pensions and the other expensive social reforms of these years. The most novel feature of these budgets was the introduction of a distinction between 'earned' and 'unearned' incomes, incomes under £2000 drawn from salary or profits paying a lower rate of tax than incomes derived from investments. At the same time the death-duties on accumulated fortunes were increased. The tendency of these charges was to make the richer part of the community pay the cost of social reform, to the advantage of the poorer part of the community, and in this way to use taxation as a means of partly redistributing the total income of the nation.

But important as were these changes, they were far surpassed by the Budget of 1909, for which Mr. Lloyd George was immediately responsible. This immense measure may not unfairly be described as the most revolutionary series of financial proposals which had ever been laid before a British Parliament. It carried very much further the tendency to lay upon great wealth the main burden of social reform, levying upon large incomes a super-tax, over and above the income-tax, and giving further relief to incomes of the lower grades. But the Budget of 1909 was not solely concerned with pure finance; it was linked up with a whole programme of social legislation for which it was to find the means, and some part of which was embodied

in itself. The part of this vast scheme which aroused the most furious controversy was the proposal of a system of new taxes on land. All the land of the country was to be valued, apart from buildings; a tax was to be levied (as in New Zealand and elsewhere) upon its capital value; and a further tax, called increment duty, was devised to intercept for the State part of all increases of value which were not due to the enterprise or capital of the owner, but to the growth of towns or other similar causes. On these proposals a fierce controversy raged, which assumed the form of a vehement attack upon the land-owning class. So passionate were the feelings which it aroused that the House of Lords, taking its courage in its hands, rejected the budget in defiance of the usage of two centuries; and by doing so assumed to itself the power of dismissing the ministry, since no ministry can survive if it is denied the necessary supplies for carrying on government. Thus was raised the largest and the most exciting constitutional issue that had been discussed in Britain since 1832. Reinforced presently by other great issues, and by the new social programme, it plunged the British people into a passionate political controversy, which engaged their attention down to the outbreak of the Great War.

§ 3. *Acute Political Controversy*, 1909-1914.

There has never been a more intense or a more vital conflict of opinion than that into which the British electorate was plunged in the election of January 1910. The constitutional problem alone was of the deepest import. On the one hand, it was urged that the powers of the House of Lords must be curtailed; not merely because it had an unvarying and overwhelming Conservative majority which gave no chance to Liberal or Labour legislation, but also because stable government would be impossible if two Houses had the power of dismissing ministries. On the other hand, it was contended that the Budget proposals were revolutionary and ruinous, and that a Second Chamber had no utility if it could not deal with proposals of such moment. The air was full of schemes for reconstructing the House of Lords or for redefining its powers; some were for abolishing it altogether. The whole system of British government was brought under review, and the bad working of the parliamentary system, the growth of bureaucracy, the rigidity of party and the despotism

of the cabinet were all raised for discussion before a bewildered electorate. The land system, the past and future social policy of the Liberals, Tariff Reform as an alternative means of social betterment, also played their part in the eager debate. And alongside of all this were grave warnings that the very existence of the nation was being imperilled by the German menace, for there had been serious alarm about the growth of the German navy in 1909. In the event the Government returned with a greatly reduced majority; the Liberals practically had the same number of members as the Conservatives, and the forty-one Labour men and the eighty-two Irish Nationalists held the balance.

The great debate on the constitutional problem had scarcely begun when King Edward VII. died. An attempt was made to find an agreed solution of the constitutional problem by a conference of party leaders; but after twenty-one meetings it failed to reach an agreement. Meanwhile the Liberals had put forward a series of resolutions embodying their proposals for limiting the veto of the House of Lords, as a preliminary to reconstructing that body; and on this issue (complicated by all the rest) a second election was fought at the end of the year; its verdict was practically the same as that of the first. In the session of 1911 the Liberal proposals were introduced as a Parliament Bill. The duration of Parliament was to be cut down to five years; the House of Lords was to be deprived of the power of dealing with money-bills, bills falling under this head being certified by the Speaker of the House of Commons; other bills they were to have the right of rejecting twice, but on a bill being presented a third time substantially unaltered, it was to be submitted for the Royal Assent whatever the House of Lords might say. This gave a chance of forcing Liberal measures through, at the price of wasting the time of Parliament by discussing them three times. After furious and bitter debates, disfigured by scenes of violence, the bill passed the House of Commons. The House of Lords reluctantly gave way; and the constitutional problem received a partial solution, pending the introduction of the promised measure for the reconstruction of the Second Chamber.

But this by no means ended the bitter political conflicts of these years. First came the new social programme. A Development Commission was set up, with large funds, to set on foot schemes of afforestation, and to en-

courage rural industries and agricultural development. A Road Board was created to take in hand the reconstruction of the main national highways, in view of the growth of motor-transport. But immeasurably the most important of these schemes was the creation of a gigantic system of State Insurance, designed to banish insecurity, so far as possible, from the lives of working people. On the one hand, there was a vast scheme of health insurance, which included all wage-earners, and was devised on a contributory basis with subsidies from the State; it involved very complicated arrangements with doctors, chemists and friendly societies, and the creation of a whole series of local authorities under a powerful central bureaucracy. On the other hand, there was a scheme of insurance against unemployment, limited at first to certain trades, but intended eventually to be universal. These huge projects were mainly due to Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they aroused an infinite amount of criticism and discussion.

The overthrow of the Lords' veto also made it practicable to introduce two old Liberal measures which the Lords had always resisted: Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment. Both aroused fierce controversy, and had to go through the lengthy process of enactment and re-enactment prescribed by the Parliament Bill, so that they took up an inordinate amount of parliamentary time. On the third Home Rule Bill, in particular, passion was aroused as it had never been aroused even in 1886. The men of Ulster, knowing that they could not now trust to the House of Lords, prepared to resist in arms, organised volunteers, took to smuggling in arms from abroad, and even set up a Provisional Government under an eminent King's Counsel; and they had the ardent support of the Conservative leaders. On the other side it was maintained that this was in effect the last opportunity of settling the Irish question by peaceful and constitutional means. The Sinn Fein movement, which derided constitutional and parliamentary action, and held that Ireland must win her freedom by disregarding British law and the British Government, was growing in strength; if this attempt failed, the hope of a peaceful and legal solution must vanish. The hope of a peaceful solution seemed in any case to be slight. Nationalists as well as Ulstermen were arming and drilling. Negotiations for a compromise seemed to be wholly unavailing: on the very

eve of the outbreak of the Great War, and with the knowledge of its imminence, a conference of political leaders from both sides, summoned by the King, had to break up without reaching a solution. Civil war appeared to be practically inevitable.

It is not surprising that those who were speculating on the probability of war should have thought it likely that Britain would stand aloof, helpless; since the test came to her at a moment when she was immersed in some of the deepest and most difficult political controversies in which she had ever been engaged. Nor was this all. She was suffering still more from a succession of paroxysms of Labour unrest. Labour was not satisfied with what Parliament was doing in the sphere of social reform. It was suffering from a rise of prices which more than balanced such increase in wages as it was able to earn: the real wages of labour, measured by purchasing power, which had never ceased to advance since 1846, were actually declining in the years following 1897. In some industries, as on the railways, wage-rates were, indeed, scandalously low. And these conditions had encouraged the preaching of the more extreme forms of Socialist doctrine, which were in these years being widely diffused, especially among the railwaymen and the miners. Crude versions of the theories of Marx were being eagerly propounded; and there were advocates of the more modern French doctrine of Syndicalism, which demands that the workers in each industry should control it and take all its proceeds. The Syndicalists taught that these ends must be attained by violent measures—by the use of the strike weapon not for specific and limited purposes, but for the attainment of large and ambitious ends. These ideas were getting a hold, not indeed among the mass of men, but among some of the more active and able of the younger men. The more vehement spirits were beginning to throw over the leadership of the Trade Union officials, and were ready to repudiate bargains made on their behalf. Confidence in parliamentary action had been undermined by the fact that the Labour members were very ineffective in Parliament, and acted as if they were merely a wing of the Liberal party. All the reform measures which had been put on the statute-book since 1906 seemed to some enthusiasts no better than pills to cure an earthquake; they wanted a complete recast of society. This was not the temper of the mass of work-people. But even they were affected by the

general atmosphere of unrest; they were hard hit by the rise in the cost of living; they were bewildered by the clamorous discussion of a multitude of public issues far removed from the questions about which they cared most. And the result was that in 1910 and the following years Britain found herself involved in a series of industrial conflicts such as she had never known in all her history. There were incessant disputes in many industries; there were prolonged and serious strikes in the mines, which in 1912 were only temporarily healed by the hurried passage of a minimum wage bill for three years; while in 1911 there was an almost total dislocation of railway traffic, and of dock-work at some of the ports, which seemed to bring the menace of revolution nearer than it had ever been. So widespread was the strike-fever in that year, that children even began to strike against going to school.

Meanwhile, throughout all this stormy time, with a vehemence which grew year by year, women were adopting methods of violence to advocate their claim to the franchise. They were interrupting meetings, breaking shop-windows, chaining themselves to railings, slashing knives through pictures in public galleries, burning down houses and churches, refusing food when imprisoned, and in general using every possible means of proving their capacity for the duties of responsible citizenship. To many Englishmen in these years it seemed that the foundations of society were being loosened, and that the British tradition of law-abiding freedom was at an end.

But the truth was that a great nation, fundamentally sober, was engaged in examining the very foundations of its political and social order. It could not do so without rousing deep feeling. And if this feeling seemed to be mounting to hysteria, the grim future was soon to prove that this was not the real temper of the nation.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD ON THE EDGE OF THE CATARACT

§ 1. *The Desire of the World for Organised Peace.*

STEADILY, and with growing momentum, the world was drifting during these years towards Niagara; and those who saw the danger were powerless to avert it. Yet the settled desire of most of the nations was for peace. They showed it by the eagerness with which they hastened, during the years following 1904, to conclude arbitration treaties one with another, on the model of that which Britain and France had adopted when they removed their outstanding differences. They showed it also by the readiness with which they took part in the second Hague Conference in 1907, a conference whose principal object was to give form and body to the general movement towards a substitution of judicial methods of settlement for brute force. But there were two Great Powers, Germany and Austria, which did not share in this general sentiment of the civilised world. They still maintained the view that force must be the ultimate determinant in international affairs. They had taken practically no part in the arbitration movement; and though they sent delegates to The Hague, it was with instructions to check and hamper the whole movement.

The attempt to come to an agreement on disarmament, which had been the purpose of the first Hague Conference, had been wrecked on the opposition of Germany; and the rebuffs which Britain had since received, in repeated attempts to persuade Germany to agree to naval disarmament, showed that it would be fruitless to revive the proposal. But the second Conference strove, in three distinct ways, to encourage and expand the arbitration movement. It proposed to draw up a universal arbitration treaty, which all nations should be asked to sign; Germany met the proposal with a flat negative. It proposed to define the types of questions which ought always to be submitted to arbitration, leaving aside non-justiciable questions of

'fundamental interest or honour,' and a list of twenty-four subjects was submitted; Germany and Austria voted against every one of the twenty-four. Finally, it was proposed that the nations should bind themselves, even on questions of fundamental interest or honour, not to go to war until a Commission of Inquiry had been appointed, and had reported on the subject in dispute. But this proposal was shelved, as impracticable. Later—in 1914—a treaty embodying these ideas was concluded between the United States and Britain, the two Powers which have most often employed arbitration as a mode of settling disputes; and, in effect, the methods thus discussed in 1907 were the methods of preserving peace subsequently embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Most of the world was ready to adopt them. The main obstacle was the obstinate resistance of Germany, who was still wedded to the doctrine of power.

In a striking speech delivered in 1911, when the international crisis was beginning to be acute, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, pointed out that the movement towards a peaceful mode of settling international disputes would only triumph if the Powers which favoured this method would band themselves together for mutual defence and the maintenance of peace; and that, until this happened, there could not be great hope of disarmament. This was an anticipation of the idea of the League of Nations, but it could not yet be adopted. In the meantime there were two methods which could be used towards this end, and, under Sir Edward Grey's guidance, Britain tried to use both. One was the employment of the Concert of Europe to avert dangers of war as they arose. It was employed with success in one crisis after another during these years. It would almost certainly have been successful in the final crisis, but Germany refused to allow it to be brought into operation. The other was the conclusion of agreements for the removal of causes of friction. Britain had made one such agreement with France in 1904; she made another with her old enemy, Russia, in 1907. Neither of these agreements was in any sense an alliance, or excluded the possibility of similar agreements with other Powers; if they were followed by common action, this was only because the three Powers felt themselves equally threatened. Britain strove persistently to reach a similar agreement with Germany. But she strove in vain.

The movement of arbitration, for which the world was ready, was wrecked by Germany. The working of the Concert of Europe was in the end stopped by Germany. The attempt to reach understandings which would remove causes of friction found unyielding resistance in Germany. There is no escaping from the conclusion that, while the natural trend of civilisation was towards some form of organised mutual guarantee of peace, Germany, still clinging to her belief in brute force as the ultimate determinant, was the obstacle in the way, and therefore the cause of the world-catastrophe. The sequence of diplomatic events during the nine unhappy years which preceded the war fully bears out this conclusion.

§ 2. *The Successive Crises of* 1905-1914.

It is not necessary to narrate in detail here the successive crises which filled these years; but it is impossible to convey any just sense of the difficulties of the time without some survey of them.

In 1905, when Russia had been put out of action by the disasters of the Japanese War, and by her domestic revolution, and when, therefore, France was dangerously isolated, a sudden crisis was raised by the high-handed action of Germany in the affairs of Morocco. There seemed reason to fear that she was striving to fix a quarrel upon France; and if that had been so, Britain could not, in her own interests, have stood by and seen France ruined. The danger of war seemed so near that, with the assent of the British Prime Minister, the military experts of France and Britain took counsel as to the part that Britain should play in the event of her being drawn into war; and their consultations disclosed the fact that, as the British army was then organised, it would have been impossible for any effective aid to be given to France in time. The danger passed off; perhaps Germany was unwilling to risk a conflict with the British navy while her own brand-new fleet was still unready. A Conference of the Powers was held at Algeciras (1906) to decide the Morocco question; and at this Conference Germany found herself so isolated, and the award was so much in favour of her rival, that she learned to regard the episode as a bitter diplomatic defeat. The first crisis had been staved off by the action of the Concert of Europe, and by the firm attitude of Britain.

Next year, 1907, Britain came to an agreement with

her age-long rival Russia, whereby the causes of friction between the two Powers in Asia were smoothed away. No kind of military agreement or alliance was implied in this arrangement; it was merely a healing of old troubles; but it made it possible for Russia, France and Britain to act in concord during the difficulties which were soon to arise. Their diplomatic co-operation came to be known as the Triple Entente, but Britain was not tied in any way to act with either France or Russia, and she acted with them only for the maintenance of peace. Germany, however, chose to regard the agreement as aimed against herself, and complained that she was being 'encircled' by the Machiavellian intrigues of King Edward VII. and Sir Edward Grey. And there was thus much of substance in her complaint, that Britain, in face of Germany's strenuous naval preparations and consistent refusal even to discuss mutual disarmament or delay in construction, felt that she was threatened, and was glad to join with Russia and France in trying to safeguard the peace of Europe. It was in this year that The Hague Conference was held; and Germany's uncompromising attitude at the Conference deepened the alarm.

In 1908 a revolution broke out in Turkey. Abdul Hamid was deposed; a constitutional régime was established; and for a time Germany's dominating influence in Turkey, upon which great projects depended, seemed to be imperilled. But it was only for a time. Within a year the unreality of the new constitution had been displayed; and the leaders of the Young Turks were hand in glove with the German ambassador. Meanwhile Austria had seized the opportunity to annex the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin (1878), whereby she had merely been entrusted with the administration of these provinces. Both provinces were inhabited by Serbs, and Serbia, thus robbed of her hopes of national unity, protested bitterly. Russia also protested. But Germany announced that if necessary she would support her ally in arms. Russia had to give way; all the more because Britain made it plain that she would not contemplate the possibility of war on a Balkan question. This was a German-Austrian triumph; but it also marked the beginning of a passionate hostility to Austria among the Serbs. Aware of this, Austria determined that Serbia must be crushed, and her ambassador at Belgrad prepared a forged set of documents to justify an attack. But the attack

was not delivered; perhaps Germany forbade. It was the first of four Austrian projects of attack upon the little Power of Serbia; the fourth was the immediate occasion of the Great War.

Meanwhile the naval rivalry between Germany and Britain had become intense. Britain had in vain proposed mutual restriction; she had even dangerously retarded her own construction as an evidence of good faith; but Germany's only response was to push on at greater speed. In 1909 Britain took alarm; some critics held that unless prompt action were taken, the German fleet would soon be stronger than the British. In spite of the protests of economisers and social reformers, the naval programme was substantially increased, and the British Dominions offered gifts of Dreadnoughts lest British naval supremacy should be impaired. But there was one safeguard. The Dreadnought type of battleship, recently introduced, had altered all the standards of naval construction, and it was too large to pass through the Kiel Canal. As Germany's naval strength depended upon her being able to transfer her ships freely from the Baltic to the North Sea, she had to undertake the enlargement of the canal, which occupied several years. This may have been part of the reason why she held Austria back from attacking Serbia. The widening of the canal was completed in June 1914; and in the next month Austria addressed to Serbia the ultimatum which began the Great War.

There was an interval of uneasy quiet in 1910. But in 1911 there was a double crisis. Italy annexed Tripoli and went to war with Turkey; this strained the loyalty of Turkey to the Triple Alliance, endangered for a time the dominance of the Central Powers in the Balkans, and showed that Italy was an uncertain member of the alliance. Yet more important was the second Morocco crisis, which arose in this year. France had taken military action in Morocco, for reasons into which we need not enter. Germany asserted that France's action was a breach of the Algeciras arrangements. But instead of appealing to the other Powers which had been parties to that agreement, or asking for a fresh conference, she sent a warship to the Morocco coast, and made it plain that the question must be settled between France and herself. This was an intolerable flouting of the Concert of Europe, and a plain attempt to bully France. Through the mouth of Mr. Lloyd George, Britain made it clear that she at any rate did not intend

to be disregarded. For some weeks war seemed imminent. Once more, as in 1906, British and French military experts took counsel together as to the action to be taken if Britain should be involved in war; but in order to make it clear that Britain was not committed to any definite action until Parliament should approve, formal letters to this effect were exchanged between the British and French Governments. Though Britain acted diplomatically with France, she was determined to keep her hands free, and not to allow either France or Russia to assume that they could count upon her support; for if they thought this, they might be less ready to maintain peace. In the end the danger of war was averted; commercial interests in Germany seem to have protested against it. But Germany forced France to cede territories to her in Central Africa as the price of her withdrawal from opposition in Morocco.

In spite of this, Germany regarded herself as having suffered a diplomatic defeat; and she began to prepare to take her revenge in another way. In 1911 she adopted an Army Act by which she greatly increased her army; in 1912 she increased it again, by a second Army Act; and in 1913 she increased it yet again by a third Army Act, raising a levy on capital to meet the cost of her enormous outlay. What was the purpose of this extraordinary activity? No Power menaced Germany. Naturally this fever of military preparation alarmed the other Powers. Russia worked hard at the construction of military railways and armament factories; France lengthened the period of compulsory service imposed upon all her manhood. Most significant of all, neutral Belgium, in a secret session of Parliament, resolved in 1913 to adopt compulsory military service; but the decision came too late to be of use. As for Britain, she decided that her main naval force must henceforward be concentrated in the North Sea, where the whole naval strength of Germany was massed. She withdrew most of her forces from the Mediterranean (1912), while France concentrated her ships in that sea. This arrangement, which was publicly known and discussed in Parliament, bound Britain in honour, though not formally, at the very least to defend the Atlantic coast of France if France should be attacked. The Great Powers of Europe were ominously drawing their forces into battle array.

In 1912 events took place which gravely threatened the great Eastern projects of Germany and Austria. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria formed the Balkan League, and attacked

and overthrew Turkey. The fall of Turkey was obviously a blow to Germany's ambitions; and the formation of the Balkan League meant that the Balkan States were escaping from her influence. The three allies, without consulting Germany or Austria, had arranged beforehand the distribution of the spoil. But Austria intervened, and forbade Serbia to take the territory which had been assigned to her, because it would have given her direct access to the sea. Once again there was a grave menace of war. It was averted by the Concert of Europe, at a congress held in London under the presidency of Sir Edward Grey; and Germany gave her support, not being yet ready for war. But Austria got her way. Serbia, deprived of the territory for which she had fought, was given compensation at the expense of Bulgaria; and Bulgaria, embittered, declared war against her recent allies (1913). The miserable second Balkan War broke up the Balkan League. This result was a disaster for European peace, but it was in every way advantageous to Germany and Austria.

Thus crisis after crisis had arisen and been with difficulty avoided. At the beginning of 1914 the sky seemed clearer than for a long time past. But the third German Army Act was being carried into effect; and the Kiel Canal was nearing completion. Moreover Austria still regarded with deep distaste the increased power of Serbia. She had been on the verge of delivering an attack in 1912, and again in 1913. In each case she had been restrained. Was she likely to leave Serbia free to consolidate and organise her recent acquisitions of territory? It was a sanguine view which Mr. Lloyd George expressed when he said, early in 1914, that peace was more secure than it had been, and that it would soon be possible to reduce armaments; it was a view scarcely likely to be shared by some of his colleagues. If Germany meant war, the circumstances were, indeed, singularly favourable to her in 1914. Ireland was on the verge of civil war. In France there had been alarming revelations about the unreadiness of the army. In Russia there were great revolutionary strikes, dislocating industry. And the Kiel Canal was nearly ready.

§ 3. *British Preparations for the Conflict.*

In face of all these successive crises and of this growing menace, what steps had Britain taken, in the midst of her own vehement political controversies, to guard against the danger that threatened her existence?

Her policy had been systematically a policy of peace. By the testimony of all Europe, including Germany, her Foreign Secretary had played the chief part, time and again, in averting the imminent danger of war. She had healed her own causes of quarrel with France and Russia, and had co-operated diplomatically with these Powers; but she had also co-operated with Italy, and once or twice with Germany, in the negotiations which preserved the peace. And she had been scrupulously careful to avoid committing herself to any formal military agreement. The nearest approach to such an agreement was the naval arrangement of 1912, which seemed the only means of ensuring her naval security; and this arrangement did not involve any undertaking of a formal kind. Her aim had been to stand aloof from the two great alliances, and to let each realise that her face was set against aggressive action. But she had also striven to come to an agreement with Germany. She had put up with several rebuffs in her endeavours to reduce the ruinous competition in naval armaments. In 1912, feeling that Germany might be afraid that there was a secret alliance with France and Russia, the Cabinet sent Lord Haldane to Berlin with a formal assurance that Britain had not made, and would not make, any agreement with any other Power for action against Germany: the German response was in substance a suggestion that Britain should pledge herself to remain neutral in the event of a European war. Finally, feeling that Germany had a legitimate grievance in regard to the comparatively small area of her colonial possessions, Britain had opened negotiations for a treaty on colonial questions: it was by means of treaties on colonial questions that she had established friendly relations with France and Russia. The negotiations were completed in 1914, and their result was such that one of the greatest colonial enthusiasts in Germany described it as conceding everything that Germany could fairly ask. The treaty was never signed, because Sir Edward Grey refused to conclude any treaty without the consent of Parliament, and Germany refused to allow this treaty to be made public. If it had been made public it would have been impossible to convince the German people that they were being excluded from their 'place in the sun.'

Undeniably Britain had striven for peace. But had she prepared for the possibility of war? Her fleet had been kept at a high pitch of efficiency: as it showed by taking

and keeping the mastery of the seas from the first day of the war. She had made plans in co-operation with French military experts. Her regular army had been completely reorganised by the assiduous work of Lord Haldane, with such efficiency that in 1914 it could be transported to France, with full equipment, in a few days: an achievement in organisation of the highest order. It was a small army, but it was perhaps the most perfect that has ever been seen. Behind it stood the Territorial Army, organised during these years: a very different force from the volunteers whom it replaced; a fully organised force, without which the line could not have been held during the first winter of the war. Officers' training corps had been organised in all the great schools and in the universities; without them the great new armies enlisted for the war could scarcely have been created. For the first time in British military history an efficient General Staff had been organised. This General Staff had branches in all the Dominions. And the Dominions, in consultation with the Committee of Imperial Defence, had reorganised their military systems, on a basis uniform with that of the mother-country, so as to make co-ordinated action easy. These preparations, which alone made it possible for Britain to hold her own in the coming ordeal, had been made quietly, and without ostentation, to avoid giving any reasonable ground for alarm which could be used by the militarists of Germany as an excuse for precipitating war. But there are some who have felt that, in view of the magnitude of the peril, conscription ought to have been adopted. Universal training for war was in fact urged by Lord Roberts, the most beloved of British soldiers, during these anxious years. But Lord Roberts urged it primarily for defence against invasion; and the event proved that the navy could guard against this danger. Nobody had ever conceived it possible that Britain should maintain both a supreme navy and an army on the continental scale, or play any such part in a continental campaign as Fate ultimately imposed upon her. The General Staff, however, had examined the possibility of conscription; and had reported that even if the nation could be persuaded to adopt it, its adoption would for some years lead to such a dislocation of the military system as to weaken the army, and to invite attack from any Power which wanted to anticipate the moment when the change would be complete. Up to the limits of military action that had ever been contemplated

as reasonably likely, Britain was not unready when the war-clouds burst. But she was very far from ready for the magnitude of the tempest to which she was presently exposed.

§ 4. *The Precipitation of the World-War.*

In June 1914, when the international horizon seemed clearer than it had been for many a day, an Austrian archduke was murdered on Austrian territory by an Austrian subject, belonging to the Serb race: Austria had many Serb subjects, most of whom hated her rule. The Austrian Government remained quiet for a month. Then it sent to the Government of Serbia a sudden ultimatum in which, without even inviting discussion, it assumed Serbia's responsibility for the murder, and made a series of demands so outrageous that no free State could have submitted to them; they were manifestly intended to lead to war. Two days were given to Serbia in which to accept these monstrous demands. Within a fortnight all the Great Powers of Europe were at war. The plunge over Niagara, when it came, was appallingly sudden. The war came, indeed, at the end, as suddenly as an earthquake shock; and in a moment the British Commonwealth found itself battling against the most terrible danger to which it had ever been exposed.

Germany asserted that she was unaware of the terms of the Austrian ultimatum. But she backed her ally without qualification. She used no restraining influence, such as she had used in 1909, in 1912, in 1913. She talked of 'localising the conflict,' which meant leaving Serbia at the mercy of Austria. But she knew, as Austria knew, that Russia could not and would not desert a little Slav State which trusted to her protection, and that France was bound by treaty to fight with Russia. Germany and Austria therefore deliberately faced the probability, indeed the certainty, of a general war.

Under pressure from Russia, France and Britain, Serbia yielded on every point save two, and offered to submit these two to The Hague Tribunal. Austria took this as a rejection of her ultimatum and declared war. Then followed ten strenuous and desperate days of negotiation in the hope of averting universal war, in which the leading part was played by Sir Edward Grey, strongly supported by France, Russia and Italy: Germany and Austria obstinately refused to take a step towards peace. Grey urged that the question

should be discussed by a conference of ambassadors, representing the Concert of Europe, such as had successfully averted earlier menaces of war: Germany and Austria refused. He begged Germany to make *any* suggestion that would make for peace, promising to support it, and to have nothing to do with France and Russia unless they also gave their support: Germany made no reply. Austria mobilised against Serbia; upon which Russia mobilised against Austria, but at the same time begged Germany to believe that mobilisation did not necessarily involve war. The Tsar implored Germany to agree to a reference of the question to The Hague Tribunal; Germany gave no reply. At the last moment Austria, apparently losing her nerve, agreed to discuss the Serbian question with Russia, and there was a gleam of hope. Thereupon Germany sent an ultimatum to Russia, demanding the instant demobilisation of the Russian army; and the greatest of wars began. Beyond any shadow or semblance of doubt, it was deliberately precipitated by Germany and Austria. The circumstances of the moment were utterly insufficient to justify their action. They were not thinking primarily of Serbia. They were thinking of world-power, and of the chance of ruining all their rivals: the vast military activity of the last three years had done its work, and the German army was at its maximum; the German navy, also, was ready, and the Kiel Canal was open. The world was faced by an attempt to secure world-domination more dangerous than that of Philip II. or Louis XIV., more dangerous even, as time was to show, than that of Napoleon. And it was the plain destiny of the British Commonwealth that she should play in this conflict the same part which she had played in the other three. Once more she must stand in the breach to defend the world's freedom.

Repeatedly, during the course of the negotiations, France and Russia had begged Sir Edward Grey to declare himself openly on their side, urging that this alone might make Germany hesitate in her headlong course. He had steadily refused, primarily because it was impossible to take so momentous a step without consulting Parliament, but also because he did not wish to do anything that might make France and Russia less earnest in pursuing peace. But at the same time he gave to Germany four plain and unmistakable warnings, that if a general war should come, Britain would have to be reckoned with: the warnings had no effect.

But there was one possibility of the war which would necessarily involve Britain: a breach of the neutrality of Belgium, which she was pledged by treaty to uphold—as Germany and Austria were also pledged. When a general war seemed all but inevitable, Sir Edward Grey, following the example of Gladstone in 1870, addressed identical notes to France and Germany, asking for assurances that the neutrality of Belgium would be respected. France gave an instantaneous and affirmative reply. Germany replied that she could not answer without disclosing her plan of campaign. Three days later German troops began to cross the Belgian frontier, thus violating a solemn pledge, and making the faith of treaties of no avail. Thereupon a British ultimatum, with twenty-four hours' grace, was sent to Berlin. When it was delivered to the German Chancellor, who seems still to have hoped that Britain's home troubles would keep her neutral, he exclaimed against the folly of going to war 'for a scrap of paper.' But it was not for any scrap of paper that the British Commonwealth entered, reluctantly but resolutely, upon the most terrible ordeal in its history: it was for good faith and honour; for the survival of freedom in the world; for the chance of carrying further that victory of Law over Force which is the essence of civilised progress; for the very existence and the future development of its own vast fellowship of varied peoples, which is the noblest embodiment of law and liberty that history has moulded.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE GREAT WAR

§ 1. *The Magnitude and Variety of the War.*

It is no part of our design to attempt here a narrative of the Great War. An epic of such colossal grandeur must lose all its significance if it be condensed into a jejune and desiccated summary. Who dare attempt to render in a few sentences the bloody clangour of Jutland, the reckless intrepidity of Zeebrugge, the tireless vigil of the Northern Seas, the inexhaustible inventiveness and gallantry of the long fight against the submarine? Who could hope to distil into paragraphs the valour and staunchness of millions of young men, suddenly withdrawn from all the familiar occupations of peace, and forced to endure the dragging, ugly misery of the trenches; or the incredible deeds of the knights of the sky, boys matching themselves against death in the upper air, with the odds always against them? What could be more hopeless than to try to record the miracles of organisation and of patient co-ordinated labour, whereby all the millions, each in his place, were kept supplied day by day with food, clothing and the munitions of war, and whereby whole nations were fed and kept at their tasks? It is plainly impossible in a few pages to give any adequate impression of such deeds as the retreat from Mons and the recoil on the Marne, the long, grim struggle for Ypres, the dogged carnage of the Somme, the desperate losing battle of March and April 1918, the storming of the Hindenburg line, the glorious failure of Gallipoli, the long, despairing struggle for Kut and its brilliant recompense, the conquest of the desert and the dazzling campaign of Palestine, the swift marches that mastered South-West Africa, the manœuvres that took place by Kilimanjaro. A story that must range over the face of the globe, and recount the deeds of millions of gallant men, is best left untold until it can be told worthily.

But there are three aspects of the Great War upon which

something must be said at the close of our long history, because they are in truth its natural culmination and conclusion. We must try to form some notion of the significance of the contribution made by the British Commonwealth to the struggle, the nature of the service which it rendered to itself and to the world; we must endeavour to measure the significance of this terrible ordeal as a test of the strength and fibre of the Commonwealth; and we must strive to estimate, so far as that is now possible, what its consequences are likely to be. All these are difficult questions to answer; the last, which is the most important, is also the most difficult.

§ 2. *The Contribution of the Commonwealth.*

Let not any citizen of the British Commonwealth, when he sets out to value the British contribution to the world-war, think of it as if it were primarily a British war, or as if British might alone had won the victory. Even if we believe, as we may, that it fell to us to bear the heaviest and the most varied burdens, this was only because of our strength; we bore no more than our share. Our glory was that we were partners with the leaders of the world's civilisation, in the defence of civilisation's dearest ideals. And it is well for the future of the world that it can truly be said that each of these partners made a decisive and indispensable contribution to the final result; for victory could not have been won without the share that each took in the common effort. Belgium, the martyr-State, by her sacrifice to honour, struck at the outset the note which distinguished this war from all others, and made defeat unthinkable. France, so long the leader of European civilisation, suffered deeper wounds than any of the allies, and gave the leadership of genius which brought ultimate victory. Her history has been intertwined with ours through the centuries, often in chivalrous enmity, sometimes in co-operation; and time and again, when the French and British peoples have been able to see eye to eye, Europe has known peace, and liberty has thriven. Now for the first time these twin leaders of western civilisation have been united in a partnership of life and death, and the myriad graves of the flower of our youth have made the soil of France as sacred to us as our own. Italy, the motherland of western civilisation, the land of the Eternal City whence Europe learnt the meaning of law, played in this

war, for the first time as a united nation, a determining part in great world-events—a part worthy of the country of Mazzini; for the war would have been lost but for her brave intervention in 1915. Nor should it be forgotten that ruined Russia, so long the enemy of freedom in Europe, saved the freedom of Europe by her terrible sacrifices in the early years of the war; and has paid for her effort by tragic later sufferings. Space fails to celebrate the part of other allies, of heroic Serbia, of Japan, of Portugal, of Rumania, of Greece. But of all the indispensable allies whose help saved us, as ours saved them, there was none whose comradeship was more welcome than that of America, the great sister-Commonwealth of the English speech. Her help came late; but with what decisive effect it came! And what a revival it brought of those generous ardours and ideals with which the war opened, but which had been dulled by its long agony! For the first time since the disruption of the Commonwealth in 1776, the American and the British peoples were found 'fighting side by side in the same cause,' as Jefferson a hundred years ago wished to see them. This volume opens with the severance between Britain and America, encouraged by France; it ends with the comradeship of Britain and America, on the soil of France.

But while we would not be guilty of the meanness of undervaluing the part which was played by our comrade-nations in the salving of the world, it is right that we should appreciate our own part, and recognise in how high a degree it accords with our history and traditions.

In each of the great crises in which the British Commonwealth has helped to save the world from the desolating domination of a single Power, the navy has played a pre-eminent part; and most often the British effort on land has been negligible in comparison with her effort on the seas. It has been the proudest tradition of the British people that their naval power has been, ever since the days of Drake and Howard, the one unconquerable bulwark of liberty. It was the distinctive feature of this war that for the first time Britain played a part on land comparable with that of the greatest military Powers; while the navy fought only one great battle, and that an indecisive one. Yet the function of the navy was as vital and decisive as its function in any earlier war. It commanded the seas from the first moment of the war; it linked together the scattered forces of the allies, and was the means of counter-

balancing the enemy's great advantage of holding the central position; it secured to the allies, and denied to the enemy, free access to the resources of all the world, and brought to bear upon him a grim pressure that slowly sapped his strength; it made possible the transport of many millions of troops; it dealt with the terrible and unforeseen menace of the submarine. If it had failed, at any moment during the long struggle, no power on earth could have prevented a German victory. It was one of the main pillars upon which the power of the allies rested. And the other pillar, as often in the past, but more fully than ever in the past, was the sister-service of the mercantile marine, by whose incessant and dangerous labours the armies were fed and supplied with the munitions of war, and the peoples of the allied nations were kept alive. It suffered terrible losses, and had to run dreadful risks, unparalleled in the history of sea-going traffic. None of the heroisms of the war was more admirable than that of the thousands of nameless seamen and stokers, who, torpedoed once and again, and having no means of hitting back when they were struck at, never hesitated to sign on for a new voyage. Other seamen, of course, of allied and neutral countries, shared in these dangers. But the British mercantile marine included, when the war began, half of the sea-going vessels of the world. It bore the main burden, and had to meet the greatest perils. The war could no more have been won without the quiet staunchness of the British mercantile marine than it could have been won without the assured and expected valour of the British navy.

Another tradition of modern British history has been that it was Britain's function to support from her wealth the efforts of the land-powers allied with her; and the sneer has often been made, as in the French Revolutionary Wars, that Britain fought with gold rather than with steel. That sneer, of a surety, can never be levelled against the British effort in the Great War. But the function of finding what are called the sinews of war was performed more ungrudgingly than even in the war against Napoleon. Britain was a rich nation; she has become a poor one; and she has taken on her back a burden of debt under which, with all her economic strength, she must stagger for a generation to come. She has sacrificed a great proportion of the immense accumulated wealth, the savings of a century, which she had invested in foreign countries;

it has passed into other hands, notably into those of America; and she faces the new era doubly crippled. This was an immense contribution, of vital importance, lacking which the war could scarcely have been carried on.

But in this war, as in no other European war in which Britain has ever been concerned, the peoples of the British Commonwealth took a share in the land-fighting not inferior to that of any of the allies, and their fighting men, including nearly all the men of military age in the homeland, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, together with large contingents from South Africa and India, numbered, not thousands, but millions; the losses in a single battle often exceeded the total numbers of Wellington's army in the Peninsula. True that in the first two years of the war the British contingent in France was a small one, and almost the whole burden fell upon the French; true also that even later the British section of the long trench line was much shorter than the French section. But even in 1914 and 1915, there was harder fighting on the British sector at Ypres than at any other part of the line. And in the later years, putting Verdun and Champagne aside, most of the heaviest fighting, from the grim struggle of the Somme onwards, was on the British front, which ran through the level country of Flanders, Artois and Picardy, and was faced by the solidest masses of German troops. Here fell the fiercest blow of the Germans in March 1918; and here were fought, by the troops which had endured that ordeal, British, Canadian and Australasian, the wonderful series of battles, from August to November, which mainly decided the issue. In the subsidiary fields of fighting the British share was yet larger. Even in Italy, British divisions had a part in stemming the tide of disaster after Caporetto. At Salonika they shared the brunt with the French and the Serbians, though there they played a minor part in the final success. Gallipoli, that heroic failure, which nevertheless kept half the Turkish army occupied at a critical moment, was almost wholly a British and 'Anzac'[1] adventure. The defence of Egypt, and the brilliant conquest of Palestine, which began the crumbling of the enemy's power, was the work of British, 'Anzac' and Indian troops; the long campaign of Mesopotamia, with its alternate disasters and victories, was wholly the concern of British and Indian troops. South African troops

[1] The word Anzac, now immortal, was formed from the initials of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps.

conquered South-West Africa, and shared with British and Indian forces the difficult campaign of East Africa; British shared with French troops the conquest of Togoland and the Cameroons; Australians and New Zealanders occupied German New Guinea and Samoa; British and Indian troops co-operated with the Japanese in the conquest of Kiao-chau.

Never in all history have campaigns so many, so varied, and so exacting been carried on by the citizens of a single Empire; never, assuredly, have such military achievements been recorded by armies nearly all of whose recruits had not entertained the thought of soldiering until they entered upon the war. And some of the greatest of these achievements were due to men who came from lands thousands of miles from the scene of fighting, lands almost without military traditions. The Canadians, whose frontiers had only once been threatened in a century and a half, the Australians, whose continent had never heard the tread of armies, the New Zealanders, who had never known war save with the Maoris, ranked from the first with the finest picked divisions of the German army, trained from youth upwards for war. Even Britain, though her history is full of wars, had scarcely ever, during the last two centuries, been represented on the field of battle by any but professional soldiers. And almost the whole of these amazing armies were enlisted and trained after the outbreak of the war. The military record of the British Commonwealth in the Great War is a thing without any sort of parallel in history; and the importance of the contribution which it made to the result is beyond estimation.

One feature of this achievement deserves special comment. In almost every field of the war British armies were made up of contingents drawn from diverse sources—from distinct nations, separated from one another often by thousands of miles of ocean. Yet there was never any difficulty in co-ordinating them under a single command; never any such difficulty as stood in the way of common action between French and British, or even British and American troops. This was partly due to their sharing a common language, though the explanation does not apply to the Indian divisions, apart from their officers. It was partly due to community of tradition and sympathy. But it was mainly due to the fact that the system of military organisation in all the members of the British Commonwealth had been devised on uniform lines; they were

divided into units of the same size, used the same weapons, had the same drill, and even, to some extent, wore the same uniform. The unity of the Commonwealth showed itself to be a very real thing, and a very valuable thing, on the field of battle.

And this indicates another, and the most remarkable, contribution of the British Commonwealth to this world-conflict. The issues of the war were of equal moment to the whole world, and in the end almost the whole world realised this. But it was natural that at first the struggle should appear, to peoples far removed from Europe, as if it were no more than the last and the most terrible of those frequent conflicts of power between rival groups of European States, which have recurred at intervals in the course of modern history; natural that these peoples should not see that it was essentially a conflict between two conceptions of civilisation, between Law and Force, between Freedom and Domination. The slowness with which the real nature of the issue dawned upon the mind of the non-European world had in it a real danger; it all but led to defeat. For the challengers of the world's peace were extraordinarily ready and strong, since they had been preparing for the issue during many years, while the Powers to whom fell the duty of resistance had to improvise their forces, and necessarily made a thousand blunders in a sphere to which most of them were unaccustomed. But there was one group of peoples, scattered over the face of the globe, who realised the magnitude of the issue from the first moment, and threw all their strength into the conflict without stint: the peoples of the British Commonwealth. Canada, Australia, remote New Zealand, South Africa, India saw instantaneously what the United States only slowly appreciated after two and a half years. They saw it because they were members of a world-wide partnership of peoples, trained by their own association to realise their mutual responsibility, and to see how intimately their own fortunes were wrapped up with those of civilisation as a whole. Technically, of course, they were necessarily involved in the war from the outset, as subjects of the British Crown. But it was not this formal fact which made them pour forth their manhood and their wealth. If they had chosen to stand aloof they could have done so. All that they did was done willingly, and under no sort of compulsion; and this is as true of India as of the self-governing Dominions. They chose to give all their strength for a cause whose greatness they

instantaneously realised, and in so doing saved the world. And they made the choice because their membership of a world-wide partnership of peoples had taught them that we are all members one of another, and that it is impossible for any people to cut itself off from the rest of the world. If civilisation is to be saved from ruin in a catastrophe yet more terrible than that of yesterday, it would seem that there must be some organised means of bringing home to all peoples a sense of their common responsibility. The British Commonwealth—the League of British Nations—by the part which it played in the Great War, pointed the way. And that was perhaps its greatest contribution.

§ 3. *The Test of the Commonwealth Ideal.*

Fifty years ago, if any political thinker had been asked whether a structure so lax as that of the British Commonwealth could stand the strain and stress of a great war, the answer would have been that it could stand no strain, that it was plainly on the way to dissolution. As late as 1911 General Bernhardi, looking forward to the coming war, confidently made the same prediction: he believed that this loose structure, which has no compulsive central power to hold it together, would fly asunder into its elements at the first threat of war. The immense experiment of trusting to freedom as the foundation of unity, and of dispensing with an effective 'sovereign power,' had never been tried before; and until the Great War it had never been seriously tested, except, in a limited degree, in the South African War. Was Burke right in the belief that the ties of common freedom, 'ties light as air,' could be 'as strong as links of iron,' or was this mere rhetoric? The ordeal of the Great War proved that the vision of the orator was more solidly founded than the calculations of the realist and the militarist; and that those who laid the foundations of the Commonwealth in freedom, taking the risks of freedom, had builded far more solidly than they could ever have dreamed. Where in all history is there anything to match those messages that came flashing across the wires from the ends of the earth in the dark days of August 1914, when everything was at stake? 'When England is at war, Canada is at war': 'To the last man and the last shilling Australia will support the cause of the Empire.' There is nothing to match the ring of these messages and their numerous fellows, save only their glorious fulfilment. Free

peoples gave their strength for a common cause with a fulness that no system of compulsion could have dreamt of exacting. There was only one member of the Commonwealth whose contribution was less than it might have been ; and this was Ireland, which had long demanded self-government, and failed to obtain it. Yet in a legal sense Ireland was subject to the central Government of the United Kingdom : compulsion might have been applied to her, but it was felt to be impossible. The exceptional case of Ireland brought out the moral even more clearly than the unanimity of the Dominions : loyalty and the sense of mutual responsibility were strongest where freedom was most complete. Tested by the most terrible ordeal of history, the principles upon which the Commonwealth had been constructed were triumphantly proved to have been sound.

In yet another way the binding force of freedom was demonstrated with extraordinary force. Until the later stages of the war the members of the British Commonwealth, unlike any other of the combatant States, trusted to voluntary enlistment for the creation of great armies ; and the results were an astounding proof of the sense of civic responsibility which freedom engenders. In the Napoleonic war it had not always proved easy to raise even the small armies which were then embodied ; the legal obligation of service in the militia had to be employed, and the press-gang was used to man the navy. In the Great War men offered themselves by millions, from every class and section of society ; they poured in from the ends of the earth, sacrificing their careers to offer their lives. From the club and the doss-house, the slum-cottage and the country mansion, the forge, the mine, the desk, the class-room, the factory they thronged, waiting patiently in long queues to enroll themselves for the chance of undergoing unexampled dangers and horrors, the nature of which, being an educated generation, they very clearly understood. They came faster than they could be trained. In Britain, which had seemed to be torn asunder by industrial and political strife, five million men voluntarily offered themselves for enlistment before compulsion was applied—one in nine of the population ; and in the Dominions the proportions were not very different. Australia never adopted conscription, unlike Canada and New Zealand ; yet even Australia, seven thousand miles from the scene of battle, enlisted more than 400,000 men, or one in twelve of the

population. Over one million and a half of men—a greater number than all the legions of Napoleon—were supplied by the self-governing Dominions, whose total population is less than 20,000,000; and an equal number came from India. Before the war it was the accepted estimate, in the conscriptionist countries of Europe, that 10 per cent. of the population represented the maximum number that could be embodied in the fighting forces. The English-speaking nations of the British Commonwealth, though they had never even contemplated the possibility of creating armies on the continental scale, succeeded (if they be regarded as a whole) in substantially exceeding this proportion, in spite of the fact that they had to maintain a supreme navy, an immense mercantile marine, and all the vast industries of warlike supply. And far the greater part of this amazing achievement was due to voluntary enlistment. The *moral* of self-governing peoples was convincingly demonstrated.

The achievement of India, though it could not bear the same proportion to India's vast population, was not less remarkable. For a time political controversy was stilled, and, though it revived later, it never interrupted recruiting. And the recruiting was all voluntary: there was pressure, of course, but there was no compulsion. The great Indian armies which did such gallant deeds in France, Egypt, Mesopotamia, East Africa and China were mainly drawn from the warlike province of the Punjab, though the Mahrattas also had a fine record. The princes of India, too, vied with one another in their offers of service, and in lavish gifts of money or kind; no sort of compulsion was needed to bring from them the tribute of their loyalty to the Commonwealth. In all her history India has never made so gigantic a common effort, not even at the command of mighty despots, as she now willingly made on behalf of the Commonwealth to which she owes unity, peace, equal laws, the liberty that equal laws secure, and the new-born aspiration after still larger liberties.

Even the primitive peoples, who had been brought within the Empire by the acquisitions of the previous generation, shared in the universal emotion by which the Commonwealth was drawn together, and showed how they valued the peace and fair dealing which it had striven to bestow on them. Had they wished to shake off a distasteful yoke, the chance was open to them; but there was no movement of unrest among them. On the contrary, the home

Government was deluged with touching demands for the chance of rendering service, and with offers of gifts of all kinds. For the first time in the world's history, peoples of every race and creed and grade of civilisation, in every continent and in the islands of every ocean, were by some miracle stirred by a common loyalty. The strength and fibre of the Commonwealth were put to the severest of tests, and bore them triumphantly, even when the grim ordeal dragged on from year to year, and utter disaster seemed imminent.

§ 4. *Some Consequences of the Great War.*

But while the Great War tested and proved the validity of the fundamental principles upon which the British Commonwealth has been built, it also brought about large changes in its structure, and in the aims and problems of its peoples. Every great war influences deeply the political and social structure of the States engaged in it; the greatest and most searching of wars must have the deepest influence. What the results of these reactions will ultimately be, none may venture to predict; but some of their immediate consequences are sufficiently striking.

To begin with, the government of the Commonwealth underwent a remarkable development. The war period saw not merely a renewal of the Imperial Conferences of the pre-war period, it saw the emergence of a wholly new thing, the Imperial War Cabinet, wherein the responsible ministers of the Dominions, together with representatives of India, joined with the inner group of the British Cabinet not merely in counsel, but in executive action for the prosecution of the war. This development forms a remarkable illustration of the elasticity of the British system: no such device would have been possible, for example, in the American system, and it may be doubted whether any other political system in the world would have allowed of it. It arose from the traditional legal position of the Crown as the head of the Executive Government. Though ministers are responsible to Parliament, they are, in law, the servants of the Crown, giving advice to the King as to the action to be taken in the national interest. All ministers in all the British realms are legally in this position: they are responsible to their several Parliaments, but they are also the servants of the Crown, advising the Crown as to the means by which the national will can best be carried into effect.

What more natural than that responsible advisers from all the King's Dominions should combine to give united advice in a supreme crisis in which all alike were involved, and in which the will of all the partner-nations was one? The method was not one which could be used in normal times, but it was suitable for an emergency; and it illustrated at once the remarkable adaptability which the British system derives from the fact that it is largely traditional and free from rigidity, and the advantages which flow from the fact that all the British lands have adopted the same methods of government.

If the working of the War Cabinet displayed the real unity of the British Commonwealth, the Peace Congress displayed yet more impressively the distinctive nationhood of its principal members. For while the British Empire had its own delegation as a single unit, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India had their distinct representatives. According to the purists of State sovereignty, this implied the dissolution of the Empire, because it implied the recognition of these Dominions as independent States. But the British Commonwealth has long been the despair of the purists of State sovereignty, because it defies all their categories: it is one State and many States at the same time. And this was recognised in the constitution of the League of Nations, the first outcome of the deliberations of the Congress, and largely the work of some of the British representatives. For while all the Dominions appear as distinct units in the Assembly of the League, in the Council of the League the British Empire is represented as a single whole. Thus the close of the war secured a formal recognition by the world of the strange and unparalleled form which the British Commonwealth had assumed: the form of a political entity which is one State and many States at the same time. Political theorists may say, if they will, that this is impossible; they will have to accommodate themselves to the fact that it is so. Thus the war brought a very definite stage in the definition of the Commonwealth. What may be the consequences of this definition, the future alone will show. But this much is certain: the independent Statehood of the great Dominions is an established and recognised fact; yet the unity of the Commonwealth is more real and more strong than it has ever been, for its reality and its strength have been doubled by the common effort and the common sacrifice of these grim and noble years.

To each of the individual members of the Commonwealth the war has brought the challenge of new problems. All alike, the motherland more vitally than any, are faced by the demand for a social reconstruction which shall give to the labouring masses a more equal share of the goods of life, and a greater control over the conditions of their labour. The standard of life has risen, and the ideal of self-government demands satisfaction in the economic as well as in the political sphere. The Dominions, more especially Australia and New Zealand, have begun to realise the danger that threatens them in the scantiness of their population; and, being resolved to maintain the predominantly British character of their civilisation, they have been drawn by their need still more closely to the motherland, whence alone they can draw the population they desire. To South Africa the war has brought a recrudescence of the racial difficulties which have been the source of all her earlier troubles; for there were elements among the Dutch population which were tempted to use the opportunity to bring about a severance from the Commonwealth. But the comradeship of the two races in the conflict promises to ease the difficulty: it is no small matter that it was a Dutch South African, General Smuts, who stood forth as the clearest expositor and panegyrist of the ideals of the Commonwealth during and after the war. Finally, in unhappy Ireland this war, like every other critical conflict in British history—like the wars against Philip II., against Louis XIV., against the French Revolution—has brought a renewal of ancient bitternesses, and has revived the old difficulties in a more acute form. As in the days of Elizabeth, as in 1689, as in 1798, so in 1916, a critical moment in the fortunes of the Commonwealth stimulated revolt and open war in Ireland; and when peace came the Irish problem was more difficult than it had ever been.

In Egypt and in India, also, the war intensified those movements of discontent and unrest which were already at work in the years before 1914. The real unanimity of India about the war, and its fundamental loyalty to the British connexion, did not prevent the rise of a vehement demand for fuller self-government, for the full privileges which the English-speaking Dominions already enjoyed. The demand was met, in 1917, by the promise of a generous and progressive advance towards responsible government; a large scheme for that end was in incubation when the

war ended, and has been put into operation since the peace. Yet neither the promise not its fulfilment availed to heal the unrest, which developed, in some quarters, into an ominous readiness to repudiate the West and all its works. In Egypt the corresponding movement, smouldering during the war, burnt into flame as soon as peace was declared. And in both countries the unrest was increased by the rapid growth among the Mohammedan community of that revival of fervour which had been growing, as we have seen, ever since 1875 or thereabouts. The downfall of Turkey, the last great independent Moslem Power, brought home to the whole Mohammedan world the fact that it had fallen wholly under the sway of the Christian States ; and when peace came all the vast realms of Islam were simmering with unrest. This must in any case have presented a difficult problem to the British Commonwealth, which includes so large a Mohammedan population ; but the difficulty was increased by the fact that the fortunes of war thrust upon Britain the responsibility for Mesopotamia and Palestine and in some degree for Arabia. Thus the whole Oriental world is seething with anti-Western feeling, which may be only an evanescent phase, but may be the source of great difficulties in the future.

As at many earlier stages of our history, victory in war has not brought surcease of trouble, but has rather raised a crop of new problems, which will challenge all that there is of wisdom and of statesmanship in the Commonwealth. Yet if we may argue from the past, the very urgency and challenge of these problems may be the stimulating cause of a new advance. It was the problems of 1763 that laid the foundations of the modern Commonwealth ; it was the difficulties created by the Napoleonic war that led to the reconstructive work of the early nineteenth century to which the Commonwealth owes its character. And the challenge of the problems of to-day may be the occasion of a still greater contribution to the enlargement of freedom and justice in the world.

At the close of our first volume we tried to define the questions which awaited solution at that stage in our history, the end of its first era. Many of these questions would not have occurred to contemporaries ; we were able to pose them because we knew that they had been raised, and, in many cases, that they had been wholly or partly solved. It would be easy to catalogue the thronging prob-

lems of to-day; and, even as they appear to us, they are manifestly of deeper import than those of 1763. But not even the wisest of us dare venture to say in what form these momentous questions will be put by Fate to us and to our sons and grandsons.

It may be that the motherland, which is still the heart whence the life-blood pulses to all the members, has already passed her grand climacteric; and that, no longer possessing the pre-eminence in the sources of material wealth from which a great part of her strength has been derived, she is destined to decline into the second rank among nations. This we shall be slow to credit; but even if it be so, this land of ancient liberty, which has created the institutions of political liberty and diffused them throughout the world, which has borne a great family of free daughter-nations, and brought peoples of every race and tongue under the shelter of her justice and her peace, has played already a part in the shaping of our world which must make her fame imperishable. But assuredly the time has not yet come when men may speak of the achievement of Britain as of a tale that is told. Great tasks await her, responsibilities that are in key with the traditions of her history. She must play her part in the reconstruction of a ruined world, and, if it may be, in the substitution of the reign of Law for that of Force. Mother of political liberty, she must find the means of adjusting the machinery of parliamentary government to the needs of a new age, under whose pressure it everywhere threatens to break down. Pioneer of the new industrial era, she must also strive to be the pioneer along the paths of industrial peace. In all these spheres the world looks to her for guidance; and if she can in any degree fulfil these hopes, it will not matter that she has lost the pre-eminence in wealth, which was hers, when all is said, only for a brief season: her greatest era will be still before her.

It may be, again, that the glorious fellowship of the free peoples whom she has bred, and of the ancient peoples whom she has aroused from stagnation, and of the simple peoples whom she has brought under her tutelage, teaching them the meaning of Law and the aspiration after Liberty, has served its purpose in the scheme of things, and is destined to be dissolved into its elements, or to pass into a still wider and looser fellowship of peoples. But this also we shall be slow to credit. Rather must we hope that this miracle of peaceful comradeship among peoples of an infinite

diversity will survive to be the model and perhaps the core of a yet wider fellowship of peoples which will ensure the reign of peace upon the earth. This British Commonwealth, whose story we have told so lamely, is, indeed, a structure so wonderful, so unlike anything that history has seen before, so Protean and so flexible in the forms which it assumes, that no man may predict its destiny. It is among States what the banyan is among trees. The banyan sends forth offshoots from its branches which root themselves in the ground, and develop into stems sometimes as solid as the parent trunk; it becomes a whole grove of trees, yet still remains one tree; and the sap that runs up through every stem is diffused through all the luxuriant interlocking branches. Even if the parent stem decays, the great many-stemmed giant remains a single living entity. It may be that something like this is the destiny of the Commonwealth. And if it be so, then, even though the parent stem should wither, it will surely remain the central shrine and sanctuary of the living cathedral that has sprung from it.

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX

[Only the principal events referred to in the text are included, together with a few events not mentioned in the text, which are inserted for purposes of reference.]

DATE		PAGE
1830	French conquest of Algeria begun	622
1841	Raja Brooke in Sarawak	633
1853	American squadron in Japan	617
1863	European fleets bombard Japanese ports	617
„	Ismail Pasha of Egypt	653
1869	Egypt begins conquest of Equatorial Provinces	653
1874	Gordon in the Sudan	653
1876	International African Assoc. founded	622
„	Egyptian *Caisse de la Dette* established	654
1876-1908	Abdul Hamid Sultan of Turkey	614
1877	Japanese revolt suppressed	618
1878	Congress of Berlin	603
„	Salvation Army founded	683
1878-91	Sir John Macdonald Prime Minister of Canada	691
1879	Austro-German alliance	609
„	Congo Free State instituted	623
„	Ismail Pasha deposed	654
„	Zulu War	706
„	Irish Land League	644
„	United African Co. in Nigeria	623
1880	Germany adopts protection	606
„	Djemal-ed-Din in Egypt	614
„	Gladstone's second ministry	639
„	Gladstone's colonial policy	625
„	Chamberlain as Radical leader	641
„	C. S. Parnell leader of Irish party	643
„	Employers' Liability Act	642
„	Ripon Governor-General of India	662, 665
„	Agreement with Afghanistan	662
„	Revolt of the Transvaal	706
„	Rhodes enters politics	676
„	De Brazza in French Congo	623
„	H. George's *Progress and Poverty*	685
1881	Secret treaty between Austria and Serbia	613
„	Tunis annexed by France	622
„	Rise of Mahdi in Sudan	655
„	Irish Land Act	645
„	Land League suppressed: Parnell in prison	645
„	B. of Majuba	707
„	Autonomy of Transvaal recognised	707
„	British North Borneo Co. founded	633
„	Social Democratic Federation founded	685
1882	Italy joins the Triple Alliance	609
„	Murder of Lord F. Cavendish	646
„	Irish Crimes Act	646
„	Irish National League founded	646
„	Married Women's Property Act	642
„	Arabi Pasha's revolt in Egypt	654
„	Bombardment of Alexandria	655
„	(Sept.) B. of Tel-el-Kebir	655
1882	Local self-government in India	666
„	Italy in Eritrea	623
„	France getting control of Western Sudan	623
1882-5	French conquests in Further India	632
1883	German officers training Turkish army	615
„	Corrupt Practices Act	642
1883-1907	Lord Cromer in Egypt	656 ff.
1883	Egyptian army (Hicks) destroyed by Mahdi	656
„	Kruger President of South African Republic	709
„	Boers in Stellaland and Goshen	709
„	Ilbert Bill (Indian magistrates)	667
„	Fabian Society founded	686
„	Seeley's *Expansion of England*	675
1884	'Reinsurance' Treaty between Germany and Russia	610
„	Berlin Conference on colonisation of Africa	608, 624-625
„	Third British Reform Act	642
„	Agitation against the House of Lords	642
„	Imperial Federation Soc. founded	675
„	Germany annexes S.W. Africa, Togoland, Cameroons	624
„	British protectorate over Lower Niger	623
„	British occupy Somaliland	629
„	Germany annexes N.E. New Guinea	634
„	British protectorate over Southern New Guinea	634
„	(Jan.) Gordon sent to evacuate Sudan	656
„	Convention of London (Transvaal)	707
„	Boers found New Republic	709
„	Gold discovered in the Transvaal	710
„	Russia occupies Merv	663
1885	Chamberlain's 'Unauthorised Programme'	641
„	Redistribution Act	642
„	(Jan.) Fall of Khartoum and death of Gordon	657
„	(July) First Salisbury ministry	646
„	French protectorate in Madagascar	627
„	German protectorate in E. Africa	626
„	Canadian Pacific Railway completed	691
„	Riel rebellion	692
„	British protectorate in Bechuanaland	709
„	Russia attacks Panjdeh	663
„	Third Burmese War: Burma annexed	665
„	Indian National Congress: first meeting	668
„	Toynbee Hall opened	683
1886	(Feb.) Third Gladstone ministry	647

DATE		PAGE
1886	First Home Rule Bill	647
„	(Aug.) Second Salisbury ministry	626, 647, 678
„	Anglo-German Treaty on the Pacific	634
„	British East Africa Co. organised	626
„	Witwatersrand goldfield opened	710
„	Seal-fisheries dispute with U.S.	693
1887	Jubilee of Queen Victoria	676
„	First Colonial Conference	676, 739
„	Irish Crimes Act	649
„	Irish Land Law	649
1888	*Wilhelm II.* German Emperor	615, 714, 725
„	Local Government Act (County Councils)	648
„	Parnell Commission	649
„	Zululand annexed	709
„	British protectorate in Matabeleland	628
1889	British South Africa Co. organised	628, 712
„	Defensive alliance between Transvaal and Orange Free State	710
„	Italian protectorate in Somaliland	629
„	London Dock Strike	686
„	Naval Defence Act	678
„	The Kaiser visits the Sultan of Turkey	726
1890	Fall of Bismarck	610, 615, 616
„	M'Kinley tariff (America)	606
„	Fall of Parnell	649
„	Transvaal franchise raised	711
„	Rhodes Prime Minister of Cape Colony	677, 713
„	Anglo-German colonial treaty	627
„	Anglo-French colonial treaty	627
„	Responsible govt. in W. Australia	699
„	Widespread strikes in Australia	701
„	Mahan's *Sea-power in History*	675
1891	'Reinsurance' treaty expires	616
„	Rapprochement between France and Russia	616
„	Anglo-Portuguese colonial treaty	628
„	Russia begins Siberian Railway	722
„	Irish land-purchase Act	649
„	Organisation of Labour parties in Australia	701
„	Land-value taxes in New Zealand	697
1892	Fourth Gladstone ministry	650
„	Second Home Rule Bill	650
„	Independent Labour Party founded	687
„	Representative element in Indian Legislative Council	671
„	Méline tariff (France)	606
1893	Afghan frontier fixed (Durand line)	663
„	Seddon Prime Minister of New Zealand	696-698
„	Responsible government in Natal	712
„	Matabele War	713
1894	War between Japan and China	619
„	Franco-German colonial treaty	627
„	Parish Councils Act	648
„	Harcourt's death-duties Budget	650
„	Armenian atrocities begin	727
„	Colonial conference at Ottawa	676

DATE		PAGE
1894	Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand	697
„	Land-legislation in New Zealand	697
1895	Third Salisbury ministry	634
„	Chamberlain Colonial Secretary	679
„	The Kiel Canal opened	728
„	Franco-Russian Alliance made public	616
„	Frontier delimitation in the Pamirs	663
„	Military reorganisation in India	664
„	Venezuela boundary dispute	721
„	Germany, Russia, and France intervene between China and Japan	723
1896	(Jan.) Jameson Raid	714
„	Revolt of Crete	726
„	Italian defeat at Adowa	629
„	Franco-British treaty regarding Siam	633
„	Kitchener begins reconquest of Sudan	658
„	Bubonic plague endemic in India	670
„	Wages Boards established in Victoria	702
1896-1911	Sir W. Laurier Prime Minister of Canada	691
1897	Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee	676
„	Third Colonial Conference	676, 739
„	Graeco-Turkish War	725, 727
„	Germany occupies Shantung	723
„	Russia occupies Port Arthur	723
„	France occupies Kwang-chau	723
„	Canada gives preferential tariff to Britain	680, 693
„	Tirah frontier campaign	663
„	Workmen's Compensation Act	684
1898	Spanish-American War	635, 721
„	U.S. acquires the Philippines	635
„	U.S. annexes Hawaii	635
„	Britain occupies Wei-hai-wei	723
„	Armenian massacres at the worst	727
„	Kaiser visits Constantinople and Damascus	726
„	German Navy Act	729
„	Conflict between England and France in Nigeria	627
„	(Sept.) B. of Omdurman: Khartoum taken	658
„	Kitchener expels French from Fashoda	628, 659
„	Irish County Councils established	650
„	Old Age Pension system in New Zealand	697
1899	(Jan.) Petition of Uitlanders for British protection	715
„	(June) Bloemfontein conference	715
„	(Oct.) Kruger's Ultimatum: S. African War begins	715, 678-679
„	(Dec.) Battles of Magersfontein, Stromberg, Colenso	717
„	Boxer Rising in China	723
„	France recognises British control of Nile Valley	628
„	Venezuela arbitration	721
„	Samoa annexed by U.S. and Germany	634

DATE		PAGE
1899	First Hague Conference	732
1899-1905	Lord Curzon Viceroy of India	663
1900	(Feb.) B. of Paardeberg	717
,,	(June) Pretoria occupied	717
,,	Guerilla war in S. Africa begins	718
,,	Federation of Australia	703
,,	Relief of Peking Legations	723
,,	British Labour Party founded	688
,,	German Navy Act	729
1901	New South Wales sets up Arbitration Court	702
1902	Edward VII.	671
,,	Peace of Vereeniging	718
,,	Fourth Colonial Conference	676, 739
,,	Anglo-Japanese alliance	724
,,	Education Act	684
,,	Bagdad Railway begun	726
1903	Murder of King and Queen of Serbia	727
,,	Alaska boundary dispute	694
,,	Irish land-purchase Act	650
,,	Chamberlain begins Tariff Reform agitation	680
,,	Durbar at Delhi	671
,,	Kitchener reorganises Indian army	664
,,	Indian university reforms	671
,,	State insurance schemes in New Zealand	697
1904	Russo-Japanese War	724, 733
,,	Franco-British *entente*	729
,,	Arbitration treaty between France and Britain	733
,,	Expedition to Tibet	664
,,	Licensing Act	684
,,	Federal Arbitration Court in Australia	702
1905	Partition of Bengal	671
,,	*Swadeshi* movement in India	748
,,	Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman Prime Minister	751
,,	Morocco crisis	765
,,	Alberta and Saskatchewan provinces of Canada	744
1906	Conference of Algeciras	765
,,	Responsible government in Transvaal	742
,,	Denshawai riots in Egypt	746
,,	Trade Disputes Act	754
,,	Provision of Meals Act	755
,,	Census of Production	755
,,	Workmen's Compensation Act	755
1906-10	Army reforms in Britain	771
1907	Second Hague Convention	763-764
,,	Anglo-Russian *Entente*	764, 766
,,	First Imperial Conference	690, 739
,,	Lord Cromer retires from Egypt	746
,,	Unrest in the Punjab	748
,,	Medical Inspection Act	755
,,	Small Holdings Act	756
1908	Turkish Revolution	766
1908	Austria seizes Bosnia	766
,,	Imperial Defence Conference	740
,,	National Convention in S. Africa	742
,,	H. H. Asquith Prime Minister	752
,,	Old Age Pensions	755
,,	Irish Universities Act	755
,,	Miners' Eight-Hours Act	755
1909	Austria prepares to attack Serbia	766
,,	Naval alarm in Britain	767
,,	Australia and New Zealand offer naval help	745
,,	Kitchener advises Australia and New Zealand on defence	745
,,	Union of South Africa	742
,,	Morley-Minto constitutional reforms in India	748-749
,,	Housing and Town-planning Act	755
,,	Trade Boards Act	756
,,	Labour Exchanges established	756
,,	Mr. Lloyd-George's Budget: the land-taxes	757
,,	Constitutional conflict with House of Lords	758
1910	King George V.	749
,,	Two general elections in Britain	758
1911	Italy annexes Tripoli: war with Turkey	767
,,	Second Morocco crisis	767
,,	German Army Act	768
,,	Second Imperial Conference	739
,,	Sir R. Borden Prime Minister of Canada	691, 744
,,	The King holds Durbar in India	749
,,	Parliament Act	759
,,	Payment of Members of Parliament	755
,,	Unemployment and Sickness Insurance Schemes	760
,,	Widespread strikes and labour unrest	762
1912	Austria prepares to attack Serbia	769
,,	Lord Haldane's mission to Germany	770
,,	German Army Act	768
,,	Balkan League defeats Turkey	769
,,	British fleet concentrated in North Sea	768
,,	French Three-Years' Service Act	768
1913	Austria prepares to attack Serbia	769
,,	German Army Act	768
,,	Belgium adopts conscription	768
1914	Anglo-German colonial treaty drafted	770
,,	(June) Serajevo murder	772
,,	(,,) Kiel Canal widened	772
,,	(July) Negotiations for preservation of peace	773
,,	(Aug.) Germany invades Belgium	774
,,	(Aug. 4) British Empire at war with Germany	774
1914-1919	The Great War	775-790

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